TOOLS FOR THE JOB

Report of the Select Committee on Member Services, Accommodations, and Benefits

Verbatim Report of Public Hearings
Corner Brook, September 5, 1985
St. John's, September 10 & 11, October 1, 1985

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Select Committee on Member Services, Accommodations, and Benefits

Public Hearing
Corner Brook
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MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Order, please!

I would like to, on behalf of my colleagues, say that we are pleased to be in the West Coast city to commence public hearings of the Select Committee which was established by the Legislature to look into and make recommendations on the accommodations, services and benefits of members of the House of Assembly. When we as a Committee discussed the issue of how we would approach this, we had to bear in mind, of course, that we have some time constraints inasmuch as the Committee was established shortly before the House adjourned. Because of some acute problems, especially in the area of accommodations for members, it was decided by the House that the Committee should investigate, look into, and make recommendations and submit a report ten days after the House reopened in the Fall, so, of course, we have time limitations.

However, the Committee in its wisdom decided that the effort would not be complete without at least having public hearings in the two larger centres of the Province, the two cities, and, of course, we are starting it off here in the city of Corner Brook. I know I speak for all of my colleagues when I say that it is always nice to come to the West Coast city, and I am sure that the people on the West Coast, whether they are here to make public presentations or whether they communicate with us through other means, in writing or oral presentations, always have points of view on matters of public interest.

I want at this time to recognize the Mayor of Corner Brook, Mayor George Hutchings, who, I understand, has a presentation to make. Thank you very much, Your Worship, for coming this morning and participating in this. Would you take your seat up here?

Before you commence, I think it is fair that I just briefly go through the motion, which was passed by the Legislature, from which this Committee was born. The motion was by Mr. Marshall and is as follows: "Mr. Speaker, before moving the adjournment of the House I would like to move the establishment of a Select Committee that the hon. the Premier (Mr. Peckford) and the hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) concurred upon with respect to accommodations and benefits of members. This committee will consist of the hon. the member for St. John's East Extern (Mr. Hickey) as Chairman, the hon. the member for Fortune-Hermitage (Mr. Simmons) as Vice-Chairman, the hon. the member for Terra Nova (Mr. Greening), Humber Valley (Mr. Woodford), Port au Port (Mr. Hodder), Bonavista North (Mr. Lush), and Menihek (Mr. Fenwick).

"I move that this committee be established as a Select Committee of the House and I think with the concurrence of the House, as well, because all members are interested in a timely response to this. It should also be accompanied with a motion, I guess, if it is agreeable to the House, that the committee report to the House within ten days of the resumption of the House in the Fall."

The motion was carried.

I will add just one thing to that, and that is to say that the terms of reference, therefore, are contained in the motion and as a consequence anyone appearing before this committee should feel free to deal with those issues in a rather wide scope. The motion, I believe, it is all- embracing and certainly we would consider it appropriate for people who are participating to comment on just about anything they perceive to be the role of the member of the House of Assembly, the difficulties or otherwise of the member in carrying out his or her responsibilities, and any thoughts or views that you have with regard to it.

Your Worship, you are on.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First of all, welcome to the City of Corner Brook to all members of the House of Assembly and to your staff. I guess I probably should start off by saying I would like to present this as an individual. Being involved in politics either directly or indirectly since '69, back in the days from being a campaign worker to working for the former Premier of the Province, Mr. Moores, and being involved in municipal government, I know how difficult it is for you as politicians to sit around in the House and decide to give yourselves, for example, an increase in compensation. It is never a very popular thing to do. It is always nice if someone else does it for you sort of thing, but it is just one of these decisions, I think, that as elected officials you must make even though you may receive criticism for it. You are going to receive criticism anyway, so I think it is the type of thing that you have to deal with.

As an individual, first of all I have a criticism of this public hearing in that it was poorly advertised. There was nothing in our local paper yesterday that I could see about the meeting today. There was one blurp last week from CBC. I think that if you are going to expect people to get out in numbers to make presentations then it has to be well advertised. You are going to get, in my opinion, a small gathering anyway. Very few people will come forward, because at the present time it does not affect them. People only get excited when it affects their pockets or something close to them. So I would think you will receive a small number of presentations. I guess one of the reasons I came this morning was knowing that you will get a small number of presentations and I think it is important that some things be said.

In our democratic society less than one per cent of the population will at any time participate as elected officials or office holders in any government process, and there are times we have to sit back and ask ourselves the question, or politicians have to ask themselves the question, why do we stand for elected office? Surely you know that you will be required to devote countless hours to the task that is ahead of you, that your lives will be in the spot light and will be irrevocably changed, every decision you make will be scrutinized and questioned, yet you still stand for elected office and we have to ask the question, why? The reasons are as varied as the individuals, as you yourselves here this morning. No question the instinct for leadership can no longer be supressed, the need to be involved and to have a say in matters which affect our lives is very, very strong. You may be thrust into the fray by people who are concerned about trends in power and accountability and I would suggest to you as elected officials, or anyone considering elected office, that you should have strong reasons for seeking election.

We must be honest and we must examine our motives. We must ask ourselves the questions, will we receive family support? Will the elected office interfere with our jobs? And do we have the necessary energy and resources to carry out the task ahead? We must ask ourselves the questions, are we seeking elected office for personal ego and power? Is it for monetary gain? Or is it to give leadership for social change and community development? I am sure the individuals who elect you, or elect all of us, I guess, would hope that it would be the third, to give leadership for social change and community development. I am sure you have heard before that you seek elected office because it is a steppingstone to a higher level of elected office.

I mentioned earlier this morning in talking to a few friends outside over coffee, that democracy is often taken for granted and not enough people get involved in the political process. People should not be content to be just observers of political power, they must be part of it.

Finally, the bottom line: There must be reasonable compensation. What that reasonable compensation is or how you arrive at that figure I do not know. It has been said on several occasions that it is better to have less numbers of people and to increase the compensation for those individuals who are serving the people of the Province. I could support easily a smaller cabinet with larger - I guess the bottom line does not change - compensation.

I use Corner Brook as an example. In all due respect to the elected officials here, I think they are fine people, but the City of Corner Brook has 25,000 people and I think could be well served by a Cabinet person with a constituency office and staff. It would serve the people better and, I think, do justice to the area. At the present time, we have two and a half representing the City of Corner Brook when, I think, it could be well represented by a Cabinet person - it must be a Cabinet person - with staff in the area, and, again, compensated sufficiently so that it would not be a drain on the individual.

It is a very important job. You are making decisions affecting a half million people and there is a heck of a lot of money involved that you are handling on behalf of the people. The opportunity has to be there for everyone. Right now it is restricted to who can get involved in elected office. I think that should not be. That restriction should be removed and all individuals regardless of their vocation should be able to seek elected office without a detriment to the individual.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I just wanted to be brief this morning. I think it is important that people have their say now. Now is the time to do it, even though they will not, I can assure they will not. Only after the fact, after you increase your salaries or whatever you want to call it, will you hear from people. It is unfortunate that they did not take the time this morning to come out and have their say.

You mentioned accommodations. We have seen over the past number of months some of the controversy about the present facilities that you have in St. John's, and some of the problems that members of the Opposition were having getting the proper accommodations. You know, all of the people who get elected in this Province and take up residence in the House of Assembly are representing the people of the Province, they are representing all of the people, not only the people in their districts.

So adequate accommodations should be available for all members of the House of Assembly regardless of their political stripes. It would be childish on the part of the government in power to treat members in Opposition to anything less than they themselves have for political reasons. All members are honourable gentlemen or ladies and deserve proper accommodations to carry out their duties.

Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Mr. Mayor, before you leave I neglected to say at the outset to people appearing before the Committee to make their presentations that the Committee felt it would be a good idea if, immediately after they made their presentation, they would just stay put for a moment to give members an opportunity to raise any questions. Let me just say that we are here to listen, that is the purpose of the public meeting. We are certainly not here to confront, we are not here to disagree with whatever is presented to us, but sometimes there might be a need for elucidation of a particular point and so on. So before turning it over to any of my colleagues who might wish to raise any questions to you, Your Worship, I have one very brief question and I would simply put it to you this way: What has been your experience in terms of dealing with MHAs of any political stripe, of any side of the House in relation to his or her ability to do the job because of physical constraints, of office accommodations, the secretarial help that they have or lack of it, the telephone system that they have or the lack of it? In other words, the physical plant. Have you any opinions on that? Have you had any experience with that which might be of benefit to us?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Well, I have seen the members of the district operate out of what I guess they call the members' quarters, the non-Cabinet people.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Backbenchers?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Backbenchers.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Right.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
You know, three, four, five in an office, and it is ludricrous. I mean, there is very little privacy. If you are going to perform a duty you have to have comfortable surroundings. It is very difficult to operate sitting on an orange crate in the corner of a room trying to provide service to your constitutents. If you are travelling you are restricted in the numbers of trips you can make in a given year because, obviously, of financial restraint. If you come to a district which is not your district, for whatever reason, there should be services available to you. For example, this group which has come to Corner Brook, regardless of your political stripes there should be facilities, secretarial services and whatever is needed to do your job within that particular district and not, Well, you are not of the right colour so you do not use the Sir Richard Squires Building, the Premier's Office, or whatever.

Again, I think that kind of thing is nit-picking and it is very childish. You are there to do a job and you must have the tools to do the job properly.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Very good. Thank you, Your Worship.

I will pass it to my colleagues now who may have some questions.

MR. SIMMONS:
First of all, welcome, Mayor George, it is good to see you again.

Let me respond to your comment about the lack of publicity for the hearings. The Committee had placed an ad in The Western Star on the 28th. of September inviting submissions. There were also similar ads in the two T.V. magazines - I do not know if you get both here - the one that is circulated with The Humber Log - is it? - The RV Weekender and The Newfoundland Herald -

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Yes. But, you know -

MR. SIMMONS:
No, just let me finish - and there was a release on August 14. That is what was done. Yesterday in Committee I, myself, expressed some concern that there had not been enough exposure to the fact that we were coming here, and I concur. But for the record, that is what was done.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Okay. But, again, it has to be done twenty-four hours before the meeting.

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes.

I have a couple of questions for the mayor, again for elucidation purposes. You mentioned a Cabinet person for the Corner Brook area. Are you saying a member for the Corner Brook area or a Cabinet person?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Well, we would like to have a Cabinet person, naturally. Obviously you would not be able to have a Cabinet minister in every district, so I correct that and say a member for the area.

MR. SIMMONS:
But are you saying reduce the

number of members of the House? Is that what you are saying?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Yes.

MR. SIMMONS:
You are saying fifty-two is too many.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Too many, yes. I think the job can be done with less.

MR. SIMMONS:
You are saying fewer members, higher remuneration?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Right.

MR. SIMMONS:
All right. That is what you meant when you said the bottom line would be the same.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Yes, right.

MR. SIMMONS:
Okay. Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if the mayor would just elaborate for a moment on what he meant by restrictions on people who would enter elective politics. You are talking about employment-type restrictions?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Well, you have to be in a certain position to offer yourself for elected office. I mean, you have to be retired and do it as a hobby, which a lot of people do, it is a hobby for them, they are looking for another challenge; they have been successful in business or whatever and now it is time to try something new. But you take a teacher living on the West Coast, for example, having to give up teaching to be in St. John's for the opening of the House. It would have to be a tremendous financial loss to that individual. So I guess what I am saying is that with certain types of vocations you can do it and it is not detrimental, but with other types you cannot. So it is restrictive because of the remuneration that you get.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mayor, do you see it as something that can be done as a hobby, as a sideline?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
It is done by a lot of people as a sideline.

MR. SIMMONS:
Is it done well, or do you want to comment on that?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Some people do it well, yes.

MR. SIMMONS:
As a sideline?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Yes, as a sideline.

MR. SIMMONS:
As a citizen and as a person who has some knowledge of elective politics, would you say that the job of a member of the House of Assembly is one that can be done on a part-time basis?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
No, it is a profession. We have never looked at it as a profession, but it is a profession. You are a professional politician, you have a tremendous responsibility to the people, you have to make some very large decisions, and you do not do that flippantly and you do not do it part-time. So you have to go at it and go at it in earnest, and you have to do it without thinking

about all the other things that you have to look after as well. I mean, you have family obligations and you have business obligations. You have to live. You have to survive in this world.

I guess I could use the analogy of the boxer, and there is a terminology for it, punch drunk or whatever, you know, they get themselves beat silly and when their career is over they have nothing. That type of thing can happen with politicians: They are there and the general public is not aware of their their role, what they have to do and what their responsibilities are. And then their political career, if they last, fine, they get a substantial pension and they are probably taken care of financially. If not, they are out the window after a term or two, they have probably lost their business, they have lost their career, in some respects, and they have to start all over again. So it is a tremendous sacrifice, and I think that keeps people away from the elected office.

MR. SIMMONS:
Two other quick questions, Mr. Chairman: First to put perhaps in another fashion one that you, Sir, put a moment ago, the question of facilities. In the view of the witness, the gentleman appearing before the Committee at the moment, in his view, in your view, Mayor, are the facilities adequate? From your perspective, do the MHAs now have adequate trappings with which to do their job.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
No, not what I have seen. What I have seen since 1969, is if you are a Cabinet minister you are okay - even some of those are questionable - but if you are not in that elite group, in Cabinet, you have to take what is left and it is usually like sharing the bunk with two brothers, it makes working, I am sure, not very efficient and very uncomfortable.

MR. SIMMONS:
Finally, for this round anyway, Mr. Chairman, just let me ask Mr. Hutchings whether he has any specific proposals. He has made a number of very helpful suggestions, whether or not they will be acted on is another question. Because he must realize that he is in the same kind of dilemma the Committee is in, he can advise the Committee and the Committee can advise the House, whether the House takes the advice of either him or the Committee is yet to be decided. But he now has an opportunity to advise the Committee, and through us the House, as to how it should go here. Is there any specific item that he has not mentioned already? He has mentioned the reduction of the size of the House, the increased remuneration, the improvement of facilities, and he has touched indirectly on the issue of the restrictions to entering into elective politics by certain categories of people. Is there any specific item that he would want to make to the Committee as a proposal for improving the capability of the MHA to do his job?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Again I am restricted this morning. Last night I hurriedly put together a few thoughts. Because of the "Advertising" of this particular meeting, it restricted the time I had available to put something together in a proper form. Normally when you put together a

presentation for a distinguished group like yourselves you spend a lot more time at it than I did over the past few hours. I have other thoughts that probably if the media were not here I would say.

MR. SIMMONS:
Thanks very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Your Worship, one quick question, just a further explanation of what you have said. If I am correct, and correct me if I am wrong, from a number of things that you have said in relation to the people who are attracted to public life, is it fair for me to say for the Committee's benefit that you are saying that because of the present set-up of compensation and accommodations and the whole package which is there, obviously, as an attraction or otherwise to would-be candidates, that with the present system that attraction, that package tends to be confined to certain groups along the social structure of society? In other words, a member of the wealthy community would have no problem because they do not have the problem of worrying about family and providing and so on. When you get below that, where there is total dependence, then there are problems. Is that a fair assessment of what you are saying?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Yes, it is. The other thing is that attitudes have to change and you are the ones to change the attitudes, attitudes among our young people, for example. We want more of our young people coming our of our high schools and universities to think in terms of getting involved in political life. Their attitude, rightly or wrongly, is have nothing to do with it. I think the image of the politician has to change and you have to change that. You are the ones to change that image.

If you listen to some of our young people when you talk about politics, they will jokingly talk about it. So the image of the politician is just not what it should be, and I think if we are going to encourage our young people to get involved in elected office, and there is a role for them to play, especially our young people, they are not going to do it under the present set-up. As I say, the politicians themselves are the ones who have to change that image of the politician.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
What you are saying, therefore, is that there has to be a total assessment of the role of the legislator, not just compensation.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Not just compensation, no.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
That is one component, but there has to be a total assessment or evaluation of the legislator in the Province who is going to get elected to the Legislature in terms of the perception by the public to the role or the job that that person has to do as an elected person, and that members of the House more or less have to see to it that this process commences, that this assessment commences.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Exactly.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I see. Thank you very much.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
You are welcome.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Any other comments?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
I did not realize I was in the hot seat here this morning.

MR. FENWICK:
When you were making your general comments about society's concept of politicians it reminded me of a story I told the boys last night.

A politician died and when they buried him they put on his tombstone: 'Here lies a politician and an honest man', and ever since that time, people going to the cemetery look at the tombstone and say, 'My, they must have been short of ground, they put two people in the same hole!' But I think that really is the perception that we have.

I want to throw a slightly tougher question at you than the ones you have been getting. You are saying - and I do not disagree with it - that we should cut the number of seats and increase the compensation, which I think is a laudable objective. Can you give us some specifics? Where would you cut? Is Corner Brook willing to give up one and a half of its seats and cut down to one? Where would you suggest that we do this?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
As an individual citizen of this city, yes. Look at the federal seats, look at Mr. Tobin's district, for example, the vast area that he has to represent. I think he has done it well with the constituency office here, which is very accessible to the general public. Again, regardless of political colours, anyone can walk into that constituency office and feel at home and get assistance. So he is better alone in that district with the finances to do the research that is needed, to have the staff that is needed to do the job that needs to be done.

MR. FENWICK:
So what are you suggesting? Right now, we have fifty-two seats in the House with a population of about 580,000, give or take a few, so we are talking 11,000 or 12,000 people per district. What kind of relationship would you like to see established with the people in Corner Brook?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Well, I made a general statement, but it would require more thought and research in terms of how much you would cut. I used Corner Brook as an example, so if you took an example of 25,000 people with one representative, again he has to have the backup staff, the research individual. It may be costly, in fact it may even cost more, but I think you could serve the people better.

MR. FENWICK:
Okay. The only other question I have, just to clue it up, is the other part of it: You are saying that MHAs should have a staffed office in their districts, are you not?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Yes.

MR. FENWICK:
I recall the office I moved into in Wabush shortly after I was elected, listed as the government member's office, and about a week later I was thrown out of it.

How do you see that happening? Is there an allowance for it, or is it actually going to be paid for by the House? What system do you see in setting up those kinds of constituency offices? The reason I mentioned it, of course, is that we have seen on the federal level that Brian Tobin has a staffed office here and I think there are one or two other provinces, judging by our research, which have moved in that direction, towards constituency offices, but across the country there does not seem to be a pattern of that yet, although I could be mistaken.

What kind of office do you see, how much staff, and so on?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Again, I am not going to give you an answer today because it is going to take some research and thought. But you talk about the image of the politicians and sometimes they are their own worst enemies. Obviously, there are certain benefits to the member who is on the side of government, no question about that. But then, it becomes so obvious and so blatant the way members in the Opposition are treated that it is a joke. I do not know if the politicians hear the people speaking, but they do talk, even people who are on the side of government, about their conduct towards other elected officials, regardless of their political colours. It is 'We look after ourselves and to hell with the rest of them! Let them fish for themselves!' And that is wrong.

MR. FENWICK:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Your Worship, one question grows out of that. You have raised an interesting point, and the observation you made, I think, is worthy of a whole lot more attention than we are able to give it this morning or, in fairness to you in making it, you have made it in very general terms and, therefore, the Committee appreciates that you obviously cannot go into the kinds of details which one would have to in order to say it is good or it is workable or it is not.

We will be going through the tapes on all of this again before we make our report, but so that we have a clear picture of where you are coming from in terms of the point you made with regard to representation, or the adequacy of the representation vis-a-vis numbers and facilities, the compensation package, whatever, is the Committee correct in interpreting your comments this way, either an improved system of constituency office or a constituency presence on behalf of each member of the House of Assembly in each constituency? You are able to view the city of Corner Brook as a unit, as a municipality, as a city; when you get outside of Corner Brook and St. John's and you are into the other parts of the Province, you tend to come down to the constituency, the one constituency.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
So we have to bear in mind that when we are talking about this whole scenario of representation, one versus two and one-half, or constituency office, we are talking about fifty-two districts, and whilst, if you were to go the route of cutting back and reducing numbers, and you did it in Corner Brook, it would be more difficult, of course, to do it in other parts. So it comes back to the main point, the whole germane point that I am trying to filter

out here.

My impression of what you have said is either government changes the system so that there is a visible presence on the part of the member of the House throughout the Province, that being achieved by virtue of a constituency office and someone to man it, or a reduction in the numbers so that, say, in the case of the city of Corner Brook, there is one person who is a Cabinet minister and who has access to Cabinet and has the opportunity to influence the thinking of government in the day-to-day process, plus a well-equipped and developed constituency office with a necessary and suitable or acceptable level of staff. This is really what you are saying, either/or.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Yes, either/or.

Well, if you take St. John's as an example, it is a large area with a population of 120,000, and you have seven, eight, ten members. I mean, it is ludicrous, because of their proximity to the House of Assembly and the seat of government. And they control so much power within Cabinet - most of them are in Cabinet - they really have the edge, do they not? It may be more difficult if you go into the Northern Peninsula, for example.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes.

One final point. I think this is important because, you know, we just cannot leave it. Your presentation is most appreciated and by nature it is provocative. And that is what the Committee is here for, that is what it is all about.

I want to make a final point, because I think my colleague here has a point to make: In any possible reduction of members of the House, it seems to me, judging from what you are saying, although not tying it down specifically and totally to the urban areas or the two cities, that you could dovetail two constituencies together.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Exactly.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
But the real loss or the greatest loss in terms of members would obviously be the city of Corner Brook, on the one hand, which is an urbanized area with a large population, and the city of St. John's, and that outside of that it may be possible to double up some constituencies.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
At least you would have the presence in that district.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Okay, thank you.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Thank you very much.

MR. SIMMONS:
If you are not in a big hurry, we are not through with you. Tom might have something, and I will go after.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Lush.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Mayor, I want to go back to a statement that you made earlier,

and I think maybe there was a question raised on it as well. It is a point very close to my heart, the point that you made referring to politics being a very restrictive game in Newfoundland. I think that is correct, and it has been that way, an arena for the wealthy and certainly conducive to some professions more so than others. I think most people would be aware of my own circumstance, therefore, it is something that I am very concerned about. I guess my question to you is this, in view of the fact that politics in Newfoundland has practically been a closed house, what can we do to open up the process? What can we do to ensure that we are giving all of our citizens, from every walk of life, a chance to participate in our government, in our political process? What do you see as probably the most important thing that we can do to open up the political process so that we can have as wide a range of people as possible?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
I think we have to start with our young people. There has to be an education of our young people. There may have to be, I guess, as Mr. Hickey mentioned, a re-thinking of how we can portray to the general public, and particularly to our young people, the role of an elected official to encourage them to get involved in elected office so that they can see that this is a challenge and an opportunity to be part of change, to be part of the decision making that will affect the lives of people around them and themselves as individuals. Again that is a start. There is no question that compensation is a factor. I guess every one, every individual, who is of age should at least feel, this is open to me, it is not just for the lawyer on Water Street, or West Street, or whatever.

So, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, we have to change our thinking towards politics and the role of the politician, the responsibilities of the politician, to make it more attractive so that kids will be saying, 'Well, really this is a career, even though a short-lived one at times. At least if I go for four years, there is not devastation after that four year period, I can go and it will be a learning experience. If all else fails, I have made a contribution and then I go back to teaching, or being an electrician, or whatever.' It is a big thing. It will be a big task ahead over the next number of years. It is not going to be solved with this Committee and probably will not be resolved tomorrow, but a start has to be made.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, this is not the time to debate the merits of the points being made. I find myself in agreement with much that Mr. Hutchings has said. There are some views I would like to introduce but, as the Committee will be aware and as anybody familiar with this process will be aware, this is not the time for argument but rather to give the members of the public an opportunity to talk, and for us to largely listen or question just for the purpose of getting clarification. So I will resist using this as a platform or a pedestal at the moment. I do have views on a number of the subjects that have been canvassed. I certainly have views on the pettiness issue that the Mayor

touched on; he and I, both, have some personal knowledge of particular instances. I have some views on the current conditions, given that I have to duck leaks in the roof to make sure that if you write me not only is the mail answered but it is answered before it gets too wet to read. So I know what he is talking about in terms of the present conditions. But since I am a man of my word and said I would not get into that issue I will not get into that issue.

I wanted to come back, and finally, to the issue of reduction of the number of MHAs. You see, George, as an elected politician you must realize the truth of the old cliche that nothing concentrates a man's mind so much as the certain knowledge that he is going to be hanged in the morning. If you are going to tell us that the solution to the problem that we are canvassing is to wipe us out, then we have to at least appeal your verdict. I state in exaggerated terms the position of what you said, because I know you did not say that. What you did say was that perhaps we ought, as an option, to look at the possibility of reducing the number of MHAs.

We find that personally interesting, because if there are fifty-two now and there are going to be fifty-two minus x the next time, then somebody is going to have to start looking for a new seat in which to seek nomination. Because notwithstanding all the concerns about restrictive entry into politics, and I share Tom Lush's view and your view, I am aware, after having twelve years in this, that you either have to be a lawyer to go into politics, or a businessman to go into politics, or be crazy like I am to go into politics. But despite the restrictions on it, a lot of us like it and enjoy it and see the challenge and want to stay in it. So if you are going to talk about reducing the numbers, the question is why. And it is an open question, it is not meant to be rhetorical, but the question is why. Are you talking about reducing from fifty-two to some number less than fifty-two, whether it is fifty-one or twenty-five? It is a detail, an important one, maybe. I want to hear what it is you are saying, whether you are saying reduce as a trade off, reduce so that you can in terms of cost efficiency spend the present amount of money on fewer people and therefore spread the largess, if you like, the remuneration more equitably, or are you saying that fifty-two is just too many, that we do not need fifty-two people to represent the concerns of the various areas of this Province?

Before you respond to that just let me put something else into the mix. I submit, and I do not say this in any condescending way at all, that your perspective this morning is with your mayor's cap on and that it makes eminent good sense for a municipal head to have to deal with a one-headed monster rather than the two-and-a-half headed monster.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
I will say the same things after November.

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes, I understand that. I did not say it as any kind of an accusation. I am saying that if I were the mayor of a town and had to sit in Corner Brook and deal with one person in St. John's or

two and a half people in St. John's, I would prefer to deal with one.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
They do not listen to us anyway, so it does not matter.

MR. SIMMONS:
Now we are getting to the heart of the matter, Mr. Chairman. It seems to me that you have to keep in mind, and I am not suggesting you have not, that when you are dealing with MHAs and their responsibilities, sometimes they deal with organizational structures, city councils, chambers of commerce, etc. I do not think you can have somebody in Fortune Bay representing 10,000 people and somebody in Corner Brook representing 25,000. While there are economies of size it is true, the other end of it is that you have the problem that one person can only successfully field so many Ombudsman type problems that an MHA spends a lot of his time on.

MR. HUTCHINGS:
You were a federal member. Look at the numbers of people you represented. Did you do a good job?

MR. SIMMONS:
An excellent job. Ask the 49.8 per cent who voted for me. I listened with interest to your comparison, and it is a very good one so far as it can be applied. If a member, federal or provincial, has a compliment of staff, there is a lot more he can do than we are doing right now. Having said that, in some respects you are comparing apples and oranges. The point you make is valid, that a member with staff can do more than a member without staff, he can serve more constituents, no question. Otherwise, you are comparing apples and oranges, in that the federal member with 80,000 population, and with federal issues as opposed to provincial issues, does not address in the same detail the kinds of issues that a provincial member addresses. To put it less clumsily, 10,000 people in Fortune - Hermitage generate almost as many one to one concerns for me as 80,000 did federally. There is a perception that the guy in St. John's is a bit nearer to you than the guy in Ottawa and, also, of course, many of the issues you are dealing with, welfare issues, are de facto provinical issues as opposed to federal issues. To get back to my question, when you talk about reduction, are you talking about it because fifty-two is just to many people, anyway, or are you saying do it as a way to trade off and get some more money to pay well the people you have?

MR. HUTCHINGS:
I think it is both, but I think the same job can be done and be done as effectively or efficiently as with the present fifty-two, and, again, as you mentioned, trade off is a good word to use.

MR. SIMMONS:
But you would not see, though, a different formula for the urban areas than the rural areas? You are not talking that, are you?

MR. HUTCHINGS:
As the Chairman mentioned this morning, it is a very complex issue and I threw it out this morning for this committee to give it some thought. We have to be willing to try something new. You may try it and it may not work, but I think it is worth a lot of thought. I do not think we are

going to resolve it here this morning, but I think it is something for you to take back to the committee and give more thought. You may have to form another committee, but just do not laugh it off type of thing, give it some serious thought.

MR. SIMMONS:
One final question: Would you find it palatable for people on the South Coast, say from Burgeo down to Hermitage, or maybe Burgeo to Terrenceville, 15,000 to 18,000 people, to have one member, and all of the people of Corner Brook and environs, 30,000 people, to have one member? Would you find that palatable?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
If the communication is there, if the general public can communicate with the member either directly or through his constituency office. Not finding someone to talk to, or not getting a reply to your correspondence, or not being able to reach somebody is the frustrating part. A lot of the concerns you mentioned can be filtered away from the member and then, at the end of a period of time, if there are serious matters which cannot be handled by the office they should be given to the member to deal with.

MR. FENWICK:
I just want to make one comment. The House has been cut in membership before. It was actually cut, in 1932, from a little over 40 to down around 30, and, of course, two years later we went under Commission of Government. I am not saying one was cause and one was effect, I am just saying that it has been done before, it was done as an economy back then. It would be interesting to talk to anyone who survived in that era to find out whether it was more difficult or easier.

I, personally, like your suggestion on that, although the politics of it may be very difficult, I think.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Your Worship, I want to thank you.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
I thought you were going to ask me another question.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I do have another question, and in my thanking you I will raise it.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
No, I am not running for office.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
No, it is not that one. You have been a most productive contributor this morning. On behalf of all my colleagues, in setting out to commence this public process of our issue I do not think we could have started in a better way than by dealing with the whole Legislature. The issue of numbers is in there and it is not something that we should just slough on the pan and put on the back burner. So I appreciate more than I can say the issues which you have raised. They have come from you with the qualification, of course, that you have not had the opportunity to provide and work out the details, it is for us to take it from there.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
I am willing to take the job to do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes. A blunt question from someone who has been in politics for twenty years and seven

elections, and I am not sure I have the answer yet, in fact I suspect I do not, but as a taxpayer, and certainly as Mayor of the second city who has dealt with scores of people of all walks of life and who, I suspect, is in a better position than a great number to have an opinion on this point, what is your considered opinion as to the perception by the general public of a member of the House of Assembly from wherever, the city area or the rural area? Would you tell us that they would be surprised to find two members of the House sharing an office, or would you tell us that, no, they would expect that? In other words, what is the perception of the people of the Province as to how a member of the House of Assembly is accommodated in Confederation Building?

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
They do not know. I think that most people look at politicians as people who are there for what they can get out of it for themselves. They really do not care until such time as you dip your hand into their pockets. Once you do that, then you will hear the cries. And it is unfortunate. Again, it goes back to the image of politics and politicians, and politicians are the ones who are going to have to change that. The people really do not know. They will listen to the media, to the news and they will say, Oh, my God, they really are living in those types of quarters. That is when they find out. You know, you are going to have to do a selling job, an educational job on the Newfoundland public on the working conditions you have, the role of the elected official and the responsibilities. I am sure that if you asked twenty people in the street, they would not be able to tell you what your salary is as an elected official.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Okay, that is all. Thank you most sincerely for your worthwhile contribution.

MAYOR HUTCHINGS:
Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Now, then, our next person who wishes to make a presentation is Councillor Doyle Mills. Mr. Mills, you have had the benefit of sitting in on this and listening, so we do not have to tell you what we are all about here or anything else, you are ready to roll. I would take it, as of now. You are on, Sir.

MR. DOYLE MILLS:
Well, Mr. Chairman, to begin with I had no idea when I left home that I was going to come here this morning, but while driving in the street it suddenly dawned on me that there was a hearing this morning. I did intend coming this afternoon to sit in, but there have been a couple of items that have been bugging me about the procedure for a number of years so I said, Look, this is my opportunity to get them off my chest.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Right.

MR. DOYLE MILLS:
In the meantime, perhaps during the conversation some other items will come up. I made a couple of notes while listening to George, he brought some things to memory. I had not a great deal of elected experience in politics, but I canvassed for the Liberal candidate in Humber District, Mr.

Gordon Bradley, in 1934, and I have been dabbling in politics and union affairs ever since.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Excuse me. In 1934?

MR. MILLS:
Yes, the last election before Commission of Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Oh, my goodness! I thought I was a senior member. Anyway, I am shot down.

MR. MILLS:
As schoolboys we were given those little mirrors which on one side said, 'The person on the other side is going to vote for Mr. Bradley'. And we had our Tories and our Liberals in various sections of the school. I also canvassed a few streets in the West End of St. John's to have Confederation put on the ballot paper, and that was no easy task at that particular time, in 1949. So I have had a little bit of experience in politics.

But a couple of things in our system have bothered me over the years: One is that the image that the House of Assembly has gotten seems to me to be so outmoded that it is time for some change. For instance, I have often felt that it is quite unnecessary now as opposed to historically, when Parliament first started, for people to vilify and abuse other members on the basis of immunity in the House. I see the need for immunity against people making an honest mistake or in the heat of debate saying something that is not quite correct, but I do not see the need of persistent vilification, and sometimes, I believe, deliberate lies. That is the perception of the public. I am an ordinary citizen and I know pretty well how people think. That might have been necessary when the laws did not protect the peoples of the houses of Parliament and they had to fight the king and his lords for freedom of speech. But that era is past and people have no fear of speaking the truth and speaking their minds in the House of Assembly and Parliament. So I think any House of Assembly or any Parliament does itself a great injustice by going too deeply into those kinds of things, because people do not believe it now, they see what is behind it, and you bring the whole system into disrepute.

I think salaries, pensions, gratuities, or whatever, should be put on a basis more akin to what the average citizen is accustomed to and what the average citizen would expect. In other words, I think pensions should be prorated on the basis of standard salaries and the number of years in the House. A man should not get a pension for spending four years in the House of Assembly, or six years or eight years, the same pension I would get for working for thirty-five or forty years at Bowater. After all, it is an individual's choice. He knows the score, therefore, he should not be overly compensated. The people believe that is featherbedding and it is done for political purposes. These things bring the whole institution into disrepute to the ordinary citizen. This is why if you send a man to a consulate or an embassey in London or France he is a statesman, and if you send a guy to the House of Assembly he is a politician. The word connotes less than. And the system has got that.

While I say that about pensions, I do believe that anybody should be able to run for the House of Assembly and that his job should be guaranteed, it should be portable. In other words, if I have a good reputation where I work and I go to my employer and say, I have been asked by my fellow citizens to run for the House of Assembly, or Ottawa, and I am going to have a smack at it, would you give me leave of absence? then I think I should get it and if I am defeated I can come back, or if I am successful and I serve for five or six years and I am defeated next time around, my employer will do his best to find a pplace for me. I think society should make those kinds of adjustments to give everybody an opportunity. It is no longer the reserve of the wealthy or the lucky or the guy who is somebody. It should be available to the ordinary person who has a reasonable amount of common sense and has developed a certain amount of political philosophy towards society, which only politicians have, by the way. I feel the word 'politician' has a terrible, terrible reputation among the younger voters who talk about politicians as either a bunch of crooks or not knowing what they are talking about. Now obviously I do not think that, I think politics is the most important institution in our society. I mean, we live by it. But how in the world have we reached the point where politicians are one of the least respected groups of citizens by and large in our society? Over the years the institution has brought it on itself. No institution is perfect, but what I am saying is let us try for goodness sake to improve this.

Now, I also believe firmly, as do most honest, good, solid-thinking citizens, that if an elected member of the House of Assembly resigns from his party he should go back to his district and have a by-election. I do not believe people think that the man is honest. I think, again, that 90 per cent of the people believe, whether it is rightly or wrongly, that he has been given something to do that, that he has been bribed in some way or other. Even if it is only satisfaction of his ego, then that is a bribe. You know, a man who feels happier today because he is a member of the government when he had only been Leader of the Opposition, that is a bribe to his ego. I think it is entirely wrong, and I do not think there is any justification for it in our society today.

I do not believe what you people are doing. For instance, last Winter I was the Deputy Mayor in Corner Brook and I had some serious differences with the policies of the Council, I felt that I could not justify some of the things that had been done, and I resigned as deputy mayor, which I thought was the honest thing to do. And I believe politicians should do the same.

I believe that somehow, hand in hand with the political activities, there should be some educational process for our young people emphasizing the necessity of good government, the place government holds, what we are supposed to do, why it is the upholder in the institution of our laws, and all of these things that go with it. You hear very little about it, as far as I can understand. In our schools the bread and butter, or the nuts and bolts of our democratic system does not seem to be emphasized too much.

I also thing, as the Mayor of Corner Brook said, that a lot of people feel that the number of seats in the House of Assembly is too large for the population. This is an area for study, because I would not see any point in reducing the number of seats in the House and increasing the number of bureaucrats. I think a lot of people feel that it would not make sense to take two members out of the House of Assembly and add five or six bureaucrats to the public service, people who would have to check with somebody in St. John's before they could make a decision anyhow. But a lot of these things are, to my mind, probably done more for tradition than need or necessity. Newfoundland's isolation, of course, is the reason for a certain number of seats, because certain areas of the Province are hard to cover. But one member in Corner Brook could have his breakfast at home, travel the whole district, from the Bay of Islands to Deer Lake, almost, and have his supper and go to bed in his home, in Corner Brook, in the same day. The same thing applies to St. John's. Now I realize that in Labrador and in Northern parts of Newfoundland, etc., the need is there because it is impossible for people to do justice physically and mentally to that vast area. But for anyone who has a good organization, and an office, it is a lark to cover Corner Brook, St. John's, Grand Falls and Windsor, those areas. I covered every street in Corner Brook a couple of times when I was running for Council.

The perception among people is you have a very large number of districts, number one, because the party wants to reward somebody for political donations, they want to give him a chance to run, or, on the other hand, with a lot of seats you could do a lot of gerrymandering when the time comes so that you have loaded the various districts in your own favour.

I am not telling you people anything new. I mean, these are historical facts, they can be verified by history. But I think the time has gone for that kind of thing. At one time the only people who knew what was going on in St. John's were a few businessmen and a few clergymen and people like that. But I know exactly, as do my son and daughter and all the rest of them, we get the news, we are reasonably well informed. People who want to keep informed can read between the lines better than people of my social standing could read from a book fifty years ago.

So it is time for government to sit down and look at all those problems and bring things up to date to be ready for the twenty-first century. We have to live with it. It is the best system in the world, no question about that, when I could walk in here off the street this morning and sit down and be heard. And I am not being critical, by the way, I am just expressing some critiques. Individually politicians are the same as any other group of people. You have SOBs in all areas of society, including the clergy and all the rest. So, by and large, you get them everywhere, that is human nature. We are not complaining about that. We cannot complain about it. But I am saying do not try to justify things by referring back to unnecessary historical facts.

I think I have said a heck of a lot more than I intended to say, but these are thoughts that have accumulated in my mind while watching things go around. I mean, it is fine to use politics when you are out there in the streets fighting an election battle, that is the name of the game - I do not know any other way - but surely after the election is over and the people have made a decision, it must be necessary to then put a certain amount of politics aside and become statesmen and run the country in the interest of everybody.

Now. I bring to your attention an instance that I had last night. I drove to Bonne Bay to attend a meeting concerning the ferry there which government is planning to drop. This is true, and it is an indication of the point I am trying to get across to you. There was a lot of talk about money being wasted on that ferry, and the news coming from government, or the bureaucrats, emanates in that direction. You see, as a citizen, as a taxpayer I am not really committed. I do not think there is any great difference in political parties. I have voted for all parties in Humber District in the past because I vote for the individual moreso than I do the party. Although I have run for a party, I am not tied to any particular party philosophy because I do not think there is that much difference in political philosophies, and I like to think I have made a good judgement.

As a taxpayer, and as an observor of the facts, and I am not now being critical, I am just saying what the perception of the people was, it was felt that that ferry might very well be lost but, on the other hand, what strikes me and what strikes a lot of people about our whole system is that it would not have been lost had the representative in the House of Assembly not changed. Now, I think that is the kind of basic dishonesty that creates some of our problems. If it was not justified three or four years ago, why could it not have been said? And I am not laying blame, I am saying let us look at these kinds of things and make good, valid, sensible judgements about them so that the people can applaud the people who make judgements rather than saying, that is another bloody political question, somebody is getting his back scratched, or his palm greased, or something like that.

I want to repeat that I am not critical of our system of government. It is the best. I like it. I like knowing that I can come in here and talk to you people and not have the RCMP put their hand on my shoulder tomorrow morning and say, Look, you have to come over here and answer some questions. It is a beautiful system and I would like to leave it somewhat improved for my children and grandchildren, and to have some feeling that it might be able to adjust itself in a changing world so that we can adjust and be able to maintain the lovely governmental structure that we have, in principle, but which needs some refinement for the twenty first century.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
I would like to make a few brief

observations on what you have said and hopefully share with you some information, and then we will go into questions. On the matter of immunity of the House, just as an observation I want to say that I certainly find myself in agreement. I have publicly stated my personal views on the matter. I think the rule of immunity came into being when there was danger or threat of insurrection and a whole range of things. I agree with you that there could be a change which would facilitate a very clearly defined application of the rule of immunity, and I agree with you that members of the House should not of their own volition and their own desire, I suppose, say anything inside the House they would not say outside. I think that should be the Golden Rule and I think there are some very unique exceptions to that. That is what I am reading into what you are saying and I wholeheartedly agree.

I think, just to make a general comment, you have gotten into the issue that I associate myself with, the Legislature of the eighties and the nineties as opposed to where we have come from. Certainly we appreciate your comments and we will make, I hope, a comment on the need for a good look at the Legislature of today and tomorrow versus the Legislature of the past. You referred to traditions, and that is what I am reading into your comments in reference to what is traditional and what should apply today and tomorrow and the next couple of decades, and we are appreciative of your sentiments.

On the matter of salaries and pensions, just as a matter of information I want to say to you that a member of the House does not qualify for a pension unless there are five years of service. As opposed to the House of Commons, where a defeated member can draw some form of pension, I believe, a member of the Provincial House of Assembly cannot draw a pension until the number of years of service added to their age equals sixty. In the case of the Premier it is fifty-five. So it is not conceivable or possible to draw a pension before the combination under the formula achieves the age of sixty in the case of members.

MR. SIMMONS:
In the case of five years service it is a very small pension, do not forget.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes. Well, the five years is related to what you said, it is related to five years, as it would be in industry, and not related to the salary per se, only the salary. I mean, the years of service is what makes your pension.

MR. MILLS:
The general information is not available. Perhaps, in that respect you people do not blow your horn enough. Perhaps it should be pointed out to the public what really is instead of haphazard statements which everybody takes for granted, type of thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes.

MR. MILLS:
I am not suggesting for one moment that the members should live in semi-poverty or anything like that, I believe their salaries should be in keeping with the amount of work they do. I think everybody should be able to live

in comfort.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Okay.

You mentioned Bowater. Again, some of our discussions have centered around members of the House and the role of the legislator by way of any compensation in relation to industry, and you have touched on the same thing. I think there is a strong defence for that. I do not think it should be an institution out to itself, so much so that it does resemble industry.

MR. MILLS:
That is true.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
At the same time, I guess what we are saying is if you look at industry today and compare it to a whole range of positions in industry and compare them to the member of the Legislature, you will find a great disparity. You will find that the legislator is far, far below the equivalent, or even less than the equivalent in industry. However, that is another matter.

You mentioned the disrespect for members of the House and for the institution itself. I can associate myself with that. It is with a deep regret that I say that I have seen or experienced some of that over the years. It boggles the mind, the difference of the perception of the public for the institution that we are talking about versus others.

You also mentioned the necessary education programme for young people to change that. I think we all associate ourselves with those things. What can be done and how quick and what determination there is on the part of government to do it is, of course, another matter.

Finally, you mentioned the matter of the ferry. While it is not the mandate of this Committee, I think it is fair that I share with you one piece of information that I was part of and privy to. Obviously I cannot go into detail, but I would want to assure you in the interest of what respect remains for the institution that we are talking about, the government and the Legislature, that the issue of the ferry that you referred to was a matter of debate long before the election, and that the decision which appeared necessary was in the making long before. And I do not read that you have said that this is the case, but you have raised it as a matter of your reading of the perception of the people.

MR. MILLS:
The perception the people have.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes. I would want to reassure you and the public that whatever else one might be able to say, I do not think that it is fair for anyone to think that a decision is going to be taken here simply based on the political stripe of representation that the area had. There are other reasons on which the decision was based and the discussions originated. I just want to say that as a matter of public record.

Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
First of all, welcome, Councillor Mills. I found what you had to say rather refreshing. I found particularly intriguing and quite plausible your ideas about bribery by ego. I had not heard it stated

that way before, but it is quite plausible and I have no doubt that it happens. It would not happen with a person as humble as I am mind you, but I am sure it happens.

I found interesting your comments about switching parties. I am not sure I agree with you. This is not the place to debate it, but I want to make a comment with a view to eliciting a response from you. There are two schools of thought, you see, one is that when you elect a member you pick the best man/woman on the ballot. The other thought is you are electing a party. I would suggest your view about the member who switches parties having to go back and seek re-election is predicated on the premise that you are electing a party, you are voting the party slate rather than voting for a person. Because, you see, if you are voting for a person you have the same person. He may now be wearing a different party label: Jim Hodder, Liberal, may now be Jim Hodder, Tory; Leo Barry, Tory, may now be Leo Barry, Liberal, but he is still the man who was elected at the polls. So my question to you in relation to this is when you advocate that someone ought to resign and seek re-election, what really is the rationale for that? Is it for him to seek the vindication of the electorate for his particular action? And, if so, ought he to seek that vindication every time he makes a major decision, whether it is a decision about party change or a decision about his position on the offshore or on the constitution? I mean, are you saying in principle that whenever a member makes a change of gears which represents a substantive change, such as a change of parties, that at any such time he ought to go back and seek to be vindicated by re-election?

MR. MILLS:

No. I do not think a person should every time. But, you see, obviously the person who decides to cross the floor, and I think that is a misdemeanor that is outdated, that should be brought up to date and put in a context that people understand. Crossing the floor is sort of a trivial type of thing that does not mean much, but it should be put in a more substantial terminology.

But, you see, human nature being what it is, people are basically suspicious of almost every other class of citizen except themselves. What I am saying is we are dealing with what effect that particular action has on our society. The perception is that the guy should not have run for that particular party, especially if we are dealing with a party, or else he now sees a better opportunity to do something. And very seldom ever are these people convincing enough, you know, that they have done it purely because they see some way to improve society. There is always the perception that in many cases there is an area there where, if you read between the lines, you can see there is a personal, self-serving interest. That is the perception that the people have of these actions, and I think the party in power who accept that should say to that guy, 'Now, look, we appreciate your speaking on our behalf in this issue, but perhaps you could arrange with your party to have a free vote on it if there is going to be a vote and stay where you are until the next election. You know, I do not think the kind of businessman's approach to these things which people expect goes into that, it is purely political decisions, and people are very cynical about political decisions. Why not make decisions on the basis of common sense and day-to-day living?

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Mills, you also touched on the issue of the number of MHAs. Perhaps it is time for me to get into the record by way of reminding everybody that some years ago, when the government of the day introduced a bill to change the number from forty-two to fifty-two, I and other members of the House opposed that increase. I felt that forty-two were enough. I worked under the system of forty-two and I believe fifty-two members for this size population is an absolute extravagance. We have twenty-two Cabinet ministers now when for a number of years this country, or this Province as it now is, was run by seven commissioners. Now, I have some disagreement with the way they did some things, but they basically managed the government over a period of sixteen years, seven commissioners, seven ministers, if you like, and now we have twenty-two fellows running all over this Province, tripping over each other. Anyway, I will not get into that, except to say that I concur with you about the lesser number. However, for the record I want to get your view as to why you are talking about a lesser number. Are you saying that there are just too many of us, or are you saying that a fewer number would mean a better distribution of the legislative funds to get the job done?

MR. MILLS:
I basically think there are too many. I have not given this any study, it is only my personal opinion. Certainly, I have not seen any study that has been made on it, and perhaps I am wrong, but I think that three members are enough in the Humber Valley; I think eight, probably, would be enough in the St. John's area. I think we could reduce the number by five all over Newfoundland, probably the Grand Falls - Windsor area and other urban areas. I am open to reading and hearing some basic facts that might change my mind, but I have looked around for a number of years and, frankly, I think we could get by on the basis that people now are expected to economize. And I think this is uppermost in people's minds. In their judgment of these facts they are saying, Look, I am asked to take a cut, I am asked to tighten my belt, I am asked to do this and I am asked to do that, here we have four people representing the Humber area, and I am not being critical of the individuals, when fewer could do it, and the same thing applies to St. John's. You could almost throw a stick from one end of St. John's to the other if you were a strong man. You see, the perception that people get about some of these things is, look, we are supposed to do this and we are supposed to do that - I am not talking about present members of the House of Assembly, I am talking about the institution itself - yet when it comes to these people tightening their belts, we never hear a word about it. I think, if it is possible, government should give this some serious consideration, and I think government would be applauded if they then said, look, we agree that we could do with less members, and if the economy improves and the population increases and so on, if it is possible we will try to lighten the load increase. I think people have the perception that

government must be the leader in everything, including these kinds of matters, and when they fall down in their leading, they sometimes lose their credibility.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Lush.

MR. LUSH:
Councillor Mills, I was intrigued by many of your remarks. Certainly you have demonstrated that you have not been a passive observer of the political scene throughout your years. I was particularly intrigued by your emphasis on knowledge. Being a teacher, of course, I can certainly empathize with that particular situation, demonstrating, I think, that the people today, the electorate have become more knowledgeable and, therefore, you cannot hoodwink them the way you could in previous years. I wish you could tell that to certain politicians. There are certain people who still believe, I think, that some of our people live in the dark ages and will believe anything they say. I happen to concur with you. I believe that today people are more enlightened or more knowledgeable, and they can see what is going on in the political field.

I do not know exactly how to attack this one. You were talking about pensions and salaries, and suggesting, I think, that nobody should become wealthy by getting into politics, and that pensions should be reasonable and should be in line with what the ordinary citizen gets.

One of the difficulties with politics today in Newfoundland, and, I suppose, for that matter, right throughout Canada, is that the way the system is it attracts people from rags to riches. You have people going into the political arena for whatever reasons. Because of past careers or lack of careers, politics is fairly enticing For example, they get a pension - they were never in a job where they paid a pension. On the other end you have professionals who have some fairly good pension packages, and to bring these two together is certainly a dilemma, and then we say it should be what the ordinary citizen gets. And I certainly get the drift of what you are suggesting.

You also mentioned about the individual choice, that a person obviously is aware of what he is getting into with respect to pension, with respect to compensation. On the other side I would ask you, do you think a person should be restricted from making that choice - because he is certainly losing pensionable benefits he had in his job, and losing compensation - to do something that that person wants to do, something to better society in the area in which that particular person lives? Do you believe that an individual's choice should be restricted because, if you will, of inadequate benefits as opposed to what that person is now?

MR. MILLS:
No, I do not at all. In fact that is one of the intriquing and the infuriating or the frustrating - there are a number of words you can use - things in the system. The psychological effect of a man of modest means sitting in the House between two people who are very affluent, who have a lot of money and can pretty well satisfy any of their demands or any of their needs, who can do anything

they want to do while the other guy finds that he is restricted, I realize there is nothing worse than that kind of situation. I think our system must make provision to have people not only sitting equally but also being able to sustain a reasonably equal ability to function, and that means being able to provide the necessary private means to sustain their position in the House. I recognize that and it has to be taken care of. In the meantime, a lot of citizens are not critical of things that are justifiable. You know, if the guy needs that much, sure, he needs it.

But a lot of things which are done and which are in the system, citizens find unjustified. That is the part that creates the problem for the public. I do not think anybody objects to members having enough money to live on and to be able to function adequately in the House of Assembly, in St. John's, throughout the two or three months that they are in operation, when they have to travel back and forth to their homes and have to entertain people from their homes and all that kind of thing, because there is a certain amount of expense involved. The thing that bothers society, I guess, is the guy who suddenly goes from rags to riches and lives rather ostensibly and flaunts his success in such a way that people say, That guy must be a politician, and he must have made it good since he is in there. Now, granted, there are not too many of these people in this day and age, but you have to guard against that kind of thing.

MR. LUSH:
I would just like to follow up, because I think when you were talking about this pension and a person making an individual choice, I believe you then proceeded to answer at least part of the problem. If I got it right, and I want to make sure that I do, you mentioned job portability. Again, as you realize, any politician who is a professional, in several areas in Newfoundland today, takes the risk of a career lost when he or she enters politics. Again, people can say it is an individual choice, certainly, but my feeling is that nobody should be denied the right and the opportunity to participate in the highest level of democracy in our land and in the governmental system. You mentioned job portability and I am wondering, to be precise, what you meant by that? I think that you were referring to a person probably being able to get a leave of absence from whatever job he is in, be it a trade or a profession. Do you think that would be difficult to bring in? I am intrigued by the notion and believe it is a good idea.

MR. MILLS:
I remember a person who worked in the mill in Corner Brook. He was making very good money, he loved politics and understood politics, and would have made, in my estimation, a good statesman and a good representative. But he was always barred by the fact that he felt, well, if I go in there and I am elected for four years, I have twenty-five years in the mill, what am I going to do if I am not elected again?" Now, in the case of that man, considering his many years of service and his clean record with Bowater, I think there should be something in our system which says to Bowater, or any other company, Look, that man grew up working in the mill and has contributed to his community and

to society in various ways - he was a very active man in community affairs - if that man requires a leave of absence to prusue a political career, you are advised to give him that leave of absence and when his political life ends and he wants to come back into your company, then you should provide a job for him. That would give him a sense of security. That man wanted to get into politics, and, in my mind, he would have made a marvellous contribution to Corner Brook and to Newfoundland. Now there is where I see it is time that we did something.

MR. FENWICK:
You have partially answered this question but I want to continue it on a bit. It is the same train of thought that you have been on there. Speaking as a leader of a political party who has recruitment problems every time an election comes around, one of the problems that you get from prospective candidates is what happens if I get elected and what happens if I get subsequently defeated? And I think that that question knaws at the minds of every elected MHA and every possible candidate.

MR. MILLS:
Sure. Sure.

MR. FENWICK:
The question I had originally framed was, what do you see as the solution to that? Is it legislation that would make it mandatory for employers to give political leave like that? Is that the kind of approach you think would be most appropriate?

MR. MILLS:
I think so, with certain precautions, you know, a number of years service plus, perhaps, the man's community record. I think, in some of the people I have seen in Corner Brook, there is no question about it that everything indicates that these people deserve that. I have always felt that way. In my own case, I had to wait until I retired to get involved, even in the municipal politics, because I could not afford to quit. But with everything else we can do, surely, we can do that. Now, I do not mean that we should penalize a company and force them to take back somebody they do not want. But surely if somebody has a record of ten, fifteen or twenty years as a good employee, and is well trained and capable, then I do not think he should be denied that security. If he had the opportunity of maintaining his security and having a term or two in the House, it would enhance his life as well as making a contribution to society.

MR. FENWICK:
Yes. One of our problems right now, of course, is that what we have is almost the reverse. For example, the employer I know best, which is the Provincial Government, they strictly mandate that its employees shall not become involved in politics, and if they are even thinking of it, they must immediately quit their job. Of course, this, I think, is the hardest thing you can do to a person.

MR. MILLS:
I am not altogether convinced that the same thing applies to the provincial government. Let us face it, and I am not convinced, and I am not going to say it here today, not on the facts that I have, that a government employee is in exactly the same position,

because for various reasons over the years many of them, perhaps, are privileged to confidential information, they have been able to build up sources of information. I have to say that I would have second thoughts, because I have not seen the issue the same. But in Corner Brook, having been closely associated with people who worked in industry, I have been able to see the need. But with regard to government employees I am not convinced entirely the same way and I would want to see more studies done on it. Probably in the lower echelons it would not make that much difference, you know, if they resigned and said, well, for the next three years I am going to take a job and then I am going to run, like they do, I think, in the municipal council, where you cannot get involved for two years.

MR. FENWICK:
But it is getting better, though.

MR. MILLS:
There should be some type of protection for the government interest as well, type of thing, a couple or three years, and probably a deputy minister five years.

MR. FENWICK:
That security of going back into employment is getting a bit better. I understand the Teachers' New Collective Bargaining Act has provisions for it. My employer actually has implemented provisions like that, too, which I am grateful for.

MR. MILLS:
Compared to fifteen or twenty years ago, a large number of our intelligent population now are in government services, or are trained and have permanent jobs in the industrial areas, and surely this must receive some consideration. But by various means, by the fact that people feel insecure and that the provincial government has certain restrictions, you are excluding a fair number of people -

MR. FENWICK:
Yes.

MR. MILLS:
- from actually participating. And I do not say that I have the answers here, I am saying that it is time we looked at those things and said, 'Look, let us put some of our brains to work on it'.

MR. FENWICK:
Just a final comment that I wanted to make. I was intrigued to hear that you had worked on Gordon Bradley's election campaign. What was it, the last election before the collapse of Responsible Government? You must have been very good at it, because Gordon Bradley, of course, and, I think, Sparkes up in Green Bay, were the only two Liberals who were elected in that particular election. That must be the reason you did so well against me in the 1982 election.

MR. MILLS:
I do not take any credit. I think it was lack of ability on the other side.

MR. FENWICK:
But, Doyle, one thing I do want to say is that some day I would like to sit down with you and talk about those election campaigns because that whole time period intrigues me, what went on at that time.

MR. MILLS:
Oh, yes, marvellous! The

Confederation issue was a marvellous thing. I spent nights and days down at the Colonial Building. It was a marvellous period of our history.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, just to stay on the note we were just on then, I hope you are writing your memoirs. You could be a best seller.

MR. MILLS:
I should, I guess.

MR. SIMMONS:
With your knowledge of political events and your turn of phrase, I am sure you could put together quite a volume.

One question: Again on the ferry decision, and I am not wanting to get into the substance of it because that is not our purpose here, but I want to use it again to draw attention and to articulate some of the concerns that we want to have aired as part of our process as a Committee. I should say for the benefit of somebody who wrote one of the stories on one of the media this morning, and I shall not say which publicly, that there is a Committee on Privileges but this is not it. This is the Committee on MHA Accommodations and Benefits. In line with the mandate of this Committee, I want to just go back to the ferry decision.

You said that you suspected, or not necessarily you suspected but that there was a perception out there that the decision was related to the party label of the newly incumbent MHA, to put names on it. You had a Tory before April, you now have a Liberal, and you said that there was a perception that that had some influence. Mr. Hickey has said otherwise, that he thought not. He and I agree on most things, we disagree on some things, and we disagree on this. I had that perception, too, and it was not a perception based on an isolated incident. I can give you a series of examples as long as your arm where there is reason to believe that the party label of the incumbent affected the decision, not the economies involved or the efficiencies involved or the argument that the ferry is no longer needed or the service is no longer needed. I have reason to believe that your perception is not far off the mark. But my point in raising it now is this: If the people - now let us call spades spades - up in the St. Barbe's seat, for example, and it could be any other seat but let us talk St. Barbe, use their democratic option and collectively elect a Liberal as opposed to a Tory or the other way around, elect a member of a particular party label, if down the road that has ramifications for the service they get, is there not some implication here for basic human rights? I mean, should not the guy who lives in Port aux Choix have the same access to public largess that the guy who lives in Cormack or Deer Lake has, for example? Do you see any human rights implications here?

MR. MILLS:
I do not know. I only referred to that in the sense that it is a recent thing and I referred to it in a sense that somehow the government, not this government, "government" per se - I do not want to be critical of the government type of thing - do not seem to see the need of giving me, a taxpayer, sufficient information so that I could say that was

justified. I mean, the decision is made in St. John's. And while I know government must make decisions, somehow with an issue of that nature government or somebody should be able to put the facts on the table and say, 'Well, as was said about other things, our economy could not longer stand it'. Now, I suspect that is the reason, but it has not been spelled out in sufficient clarity for the ordinary citizen to say it is so and he puts his own context on it which, again, diminishes the credibility of our governments, whoever they are. I do not have any information, at least not information to be critical of that scene, but I brought it up to demonstrate that governments over the years have, probably by default more or less, brought the institution into disrepute by feeling, Well, I am elected, we are the government so that is all we need to do, we are going to make those decisions and people will just have to accept it."

MR. SIMMONS:
Thank you.

MR. HICKEY:
Well, let me just wind up. We have another gentleman waiting to come in in about ten minutes. A couple of things very quickly: I feel an obligation to say as I said at the outset, and my colleague, Mr. Simmons, points out, that this Committee is not in power to deal with the ferry issue. However, it is a public forum we are in, the media is here to do a job and it is natural that they do it, and the issue of the ferry has arisen.

I want to say a couple of things on it: One, I could not be party to, before, now or future, any government, any group of people who form a government to deliberately, callously, and in a most partisan way remove a service purely and solely based on the pattern of voting which took place or has taken place in a constituency. I just want to say that as a personal note. I have the opportunity to say to you and can say to you with, I think, a fair degree of assurance and accuracy that I was a member of the Planning and Priorities Committee prior to the election, and a member of the Provincial Cabinet, and I am not at liberty to go into any detail, but I have to refute any suggestion that any decision was taken by the government in relation to the ferry in Bonne Bay based on the results of the election. And the reason I have to refute that and allay any fears there might be is because I participated in and am collectively responsible for some dialogue and discussion which took place on that very issue and I assure this Committee and you, Mr. Mills, that the discussion during those days on that issue was based purely and solely on the issue of economics, on the issue of the availability of funds to maintain and improve and increase ferry services in the Province, and I remember as though it were yesterday one of the chief arguments put forward being ferries are provided as a means of transportation, of bridging two areas, two geographic areas or two communities, not only and solely to maintain or nurture or enrich a tourism package, that the first responsibility of the government is to provide a transportation link for all the larger reasons and not solely and wholly tourism. It was on the basis of those premises that that discussion and decision, as far as I am concerned, was taken. I am not finding myself in a situation where I have to support the government that I am a part of today, I am a backbencher, I am a free agent, I am an independent thinker and I have been removed from the responsibility of having to toe any line, so I hope I say to you, Mr. Mills, with credibility that any suggestion that the decision was taken along partisan lines because of the way people voted is false. I understand clearly you did not say that it was, you talked about perception.

MR. MILLS:
No, no. I want to make it plain that I did not use the example. I just said it is the perception people get because of lack of information.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Right. I think what you have said, and I agree with you, is that this, unfortunately, is another classic example of the perception of both government and Legislature by our people, hence the need for all of us, and especially this Committee, to put in place a mechanism to try to improve the public image of the Legislature and the government of which you are proud as a tradition and as an institution.

MR. MILLS:
That is the only reason I came here this morning.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I thank you very much, Sir, on behalf of my colleagues for coming along and your contribution is appreciated. We have found some of the things that you have talked about close to our hearts and some of my colleagues have expressed their own views on it. I thank you for coming along this morning, taking time out to let us have your opinions. Thank you very much.

MR. MILLS:
I hope you get some good results from Corner Brook.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much.

MR. MILLS:
Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Now, then, time is slipping by and the next person who wishes to appear before us is Mr. Jerome Jesso from Corner Brook, at twelve-thirty. So, Mr. Jesso, you might as well start early and it will give you a little extra time, if you so wish. You have not had the benefit of some of the dialogue which has gone on, so I will just hopefully help you a little bit by saying a couple of things to you about the terms of reference for which the Committee was established. Let me say, in very brief terms, a motion was passed in the Legislature just before adjournment that this Committee be struck to investigate, explore, make recommendations on and report back to the House ten days after it resumed sitting in the Fall. So approximately the first week in November our report must be ready. So we have sort of a time constraint in terms of our deliberations on the issues of accommodation and benefits/services of members of the House.

Enlarging on that very briefly, the Committee has interpreted that motion and that terms of reference is in its broadest scope and views it as an opportunity for you and members of the public, as well as ourselves, to approaches the issues in a very general way; the office accommodation, secreterial services, research services, research resource people that are necessary for members of the House; a compensation package, whether it be sessional indemnity, whether it be district allowance, whether it be per diem allowance, travel allowance, etc. Anything and everything which is necessary and which plays a part in enabling a member of the House to perform his or her duties on behalf of, firstly, his or her constituents in the riding that he or she represents and, in general, the Province as the larger constituency. So the terms of reference are very broad in that sense.

My final comment to you is that it would seem to me that it is wide open for you to address almost any issue pertaining to the functioning of the Legislature, whether it is the number in the Legislature, in terms of members, which has been raised here this morning, and all that flows from the makeup of the Legislature, including the detailed areas that I have mentioned, such as compensation, indemnity, the kind of office space, the secreterial and the research systems that we have.

So really it is pretty wide open, it is pretty free wheeling, and on that note, on behalf of my colleagues, I welcome you and thank you for coming, for taking the time out of your lunch hour, I believe, to come along and share with us your views. We will hear what you will have to say and then we will give a few moments to my colleagues, and myself, to maybe raise some questions of clarification.

Let me assure you and all the people who appear before us, we are here to listen. We are not here to confront. However, whatever views one may have, however we might differ, it is not the process for us to differ, the process is to cause some elucidation, maybe, of points, so that, we get clearly your message that you have to give us. We are in your hands and feel free to raise any issues.

MR. JESSO:
First, I appreciate your coming to Corner Brook. I have no political affiliation myself. I have come here as a private citizen to express some of my concerns and opinions before you. I have made several notes and I will generally try to follow them. I have organized my notes under salaries, travel and transportation, accommodation, clerical, research and administrative assistance and the last one is methods for addressing those concerns.

In several cases I have chosen specific numbers, other times I have just got broad opinions on things. In some cases those numbers are quite arbitrary on my part when I think of dollars, distances and those kinds of things. So, to some extent I have picked some numbers out of the air.

Let me first of all talk about MHAs' salaries. By the way, besides expressing opinions, as your average citizen I know very little about the administration of the House. We see the things that make the public prints and get on the media but the day to day running of your jobs and your offices we as public citizens know very little. I am sure many of you can think back to the time before you were ever elected yourselves. You did not know what you were getting into. So it seems to me that I am under the opinion that MHAs' salaries I believe are in the mid $20,000 range. By the way, I am going to be asking some questions today too because I simply do no have information. To me this seems like a terribly inadequate salary. I have many friends say that, "I simply cannot afford to run for election because I could not afford it. I pay my mortgage, etc., etc." You know those concerns, and I believe a member resigned a couple of years ago because he just could not make it.

MR. SIMMONS:
He is over there.

MR. JESSO:
He just could not stay out of it. It must have been in the blood. Okay.

Many citizens would have to leave their local jobs to go to St. John's and to be a member of the Legislature, so they would lose their regular income and have to get by on what I consider a woefully inadequate income. It seems to me that we are in danger of creating a situation here where only those of independent means or conversely, those on welfare,.would be able to run for Legislature. Your average citizen who works downtown anywhere simply cannot afford it. With all due respect to the members before me, I do not imply you are a member of either of those groups. So we need to attract a broad range of citizens. We cannot have people who are just independently wealthy running our country. We need people from various professions and occupations who will give good broad representation because it is for the good of the Province.

Now, do I understand that members serving on various types of committees of the Legislature are remunerated extra for that? What I am asking is can an MHA pick up extra dollars for being on various types of committees?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Excuse me, I want to make sure Sir that you are being recorded.

MR. SIMMONS:
The technical reason we are not responding to you now is the absence of the recording technican for a moment. As long as you keep talking we have no technical problems. As soon as another mike comes on, we have. If you just put your questions we will respond to them when he comes back in. Well, there he is now.

MR. JESSO:
Okay. In my opinion you get a pretty crummy salary. Is there an opportunity by serving on various committees of supplementing your salaries? Do you get paid for being on a committee of the Legislature?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Let me respond very quickly and briefly by saying that there is a compensation package for service on committees but it is very small and the duration and the make up of the committee I would have to answer you in the negative and I will give you the details after. The amount of monies received for membership on committees would not change the salary of a member of the House substantially in terms of the context that you are speaking.

MR. JESSO:
Yes. My other concern too was that would all members of the Legislature, no matter what party

they are in, get equal access to said committees?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Usually there is pretty fair representation. All parties are involved in terms of committees.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Chairman, I beg to differ. There is very spotty representation, especially on paid committees. Paid committees, there is really only one and that is the Public Accounts Committee. The other committees, like this one, for example, the remuneration is fifty dollars each day it sits and that is it. So we intend to sit I think something like ten days in its full effort. So you are talking in the range of $500.

MR. JESSO:
In other words it is not something you can count on as an ongoing part of your income?

MR. FENWICK:
No you cannot count on it. It will not educate your kids. That is probably the best way to look at it.

MR. JESSO:
Okay.

MR. LUSH:
I think another point that should be made is that our House, probably in comparison to other Legislatures across Canada, has very few committees. In some Legislatures they have a lot of committees. We have very few committees of this nature. As as matter of fact I think this is the only one that is in existence now in this particular sitting of the House.

MR. JESSO:
Okay.

Another question I would like to address to you is that periodically we have heard the term session pay and there was some flack there a year or two ago where members got what appeared like an inordinate amount of money for a very short session. I was thinking to eliminate those kinds of things I would prefer to see members on an annual salary paid twelve months a year and with none of this stuff about sessions. It should be independent of whenever the sessions are held.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Let me allay your fears on that Mr. Jesso by telling you that that has been eliminated. What you have raised there very accurately put is the opportunity under the old system for a member to receive a double or two sessional indemnities. In other words when there is an election, when there is a House and it is disolved and there is an election writ and then there is a new House in the one calendar year. On two occasions members received that double indemnity but that is now wiped out, that is done away with, that is not possible, that cannot happen anymore.

MR. JESSO:
That leaves people cynical you know because that is all they hear.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Maybe it is worthwhile that I just give you a couple of figures. You asked for them and you said you did not have them. Just so you know what you are referring to in terms of dollars, the annual indemnity of a member of the House in this Province is $23,022. In addition to that the member received a district allowance for expenses or travel, whatever, of $11,511 for a St. John's area, a

certain category of member who does not have to travel long distances, to $15,511, which is the highest one, to say Mr. Warren and Mr. Hiscock, who represent the coastal areas of Labrador. So it goes from a low of $11 to a high of $15. Now, some might argue that that is not salary per se. Part of it is lumped in and looked upon as salary but it really is not salary in the strict sense of the word because it is more expense than salary because it is spent in order to enable the person to do their job.

One other piece of information you should have. The Premier's salary is $41,000 and a minister's salary is $30,000, in addition to the sessional indemnity. So what we are talking about here in terms of the compensation - we are talking about all of it, it is all open for discussion, but when you talk about a member of the House you have to differentiate between a member of the House who is a minister and a member of the House who is not.

MR. JESSO:
My discussion here is only of MHAs, your regular MHA, because it seems with Cabinet allowances and that kind of stuff, those guys probably are not to badly off.

Anyway, I suggest one of two things: number one might be to poll our sister provinces and see what those people are getting -

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
That is being done.

MR. JESSO:
- maybe take an average of that and, since we are a poor Province, take a little less than whatever the Canadian average is. Now, that might be horrendous too, I do not know. That may not be a solution, but it would be a thing you could quite simply do, I am sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
May I just give you another piece of information on that. That is being done. In fact, we have, effective 1982, the salaries, the compensation package for provinces and territories across the country. We are now, through our resource people, updating that for 1985.

Let me just give you a few figures so again, you will know where we are coming from in terms of this particular issue:

Nova Scotia, sessional indemnity, in relation to the $23,000 that I quoted you for Newfoundland, Nova Scotia is $29,900 or $29,100, I am not sure, but it is in the range of $29,000; New Brunswick is $40,000; P.E.I. is $22,000. That is for the Atlantic region. When you go beyond that, they go higher, Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, etcetera.

MR. JESSO:
Okay, my alternate suggestion to that as I began it a few minutes ago, as I said, I have taken some arbitrary numbers so, as an alternative to getting an average, I suggest the number of $40,000 a year. I think that would be an adequate salary for an MHA. I just picked the number that I think would adequately represent what I think an MHA should earn.

It would be important, whatever figure is chosen - I guess I say this for the benefit of Opposition members - to get all-party agreement so that we do not have members pontificating about the terrible salaries that are going to be given out now, knowing that they are going to get the salaries anyway.

What I am suggesting, though, is a substantial increase, but do it in an all-party way and do not be too greedy. Maybe you can find some middle of the road figure there. So that is all I have to say on salary.

In terms of travel, your personal transportation, I would like to address that for a few minutes. I understand that you get twelve trips a year?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
That is correct.

MR. JESSO:
Of course this is more important for an MHA who is far away from St. John's. Nearby MHAs can probably drive to their districts. So this is a more critical aspect for those members both in terms of cost and time away from your offices. I noticed a few minutes ago you made some reference to travel allowances which were graded by distance, there are some members nearby got a certain amount and I think that is a good idea. I am not sure if the figures are adequate or not, I just do not know that. Of course it seems to me that inside of fifty or sixty miles to St. John's it is really not too critical.

I wonder in general how long the session is in House a year? Is it about eight months or so? Six?

MR. FENWICK:
I think we sat ninety-seven days and if you worked that into five day weeks you are talking about twenty weeks. So it is twenty weeks of the year it seems that we have sat. That by the way is quite high. There are only I think two or three Legislatures -

MR. HICKEY:
We are quite high in terms of across the country.

MR. JESSO:
Twenty weeks, you are talking about five months then.

MR. SIMMONS:
Only the federal Parliament in Ottawa and one other province sits more than we do.

MR. FENWICK:
Ontario sits more than we do.

MR. JESSO:
So these twelve trips then, is that the time we are talking about? Does an MHA have to spend time in St. John's when the House is not in session. He must have other administrative work?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
If I can clarify that for you a little further, Sir. The twelve trips that are provided works both ways. When the House is open, the member has to be in St. John's. If their normal residence is in their constituency or somewhere outside of St. John's, so in that instance the trips would work taking the member from St. John's to his constituency and back. When the House is closed and the member is home at his residence, be it in his constituency or elsewhere, then the member has to travel to St. John's and back to facilitate certain things on behalf of his constituency. So it works both ways.

MR. JESSO:
In light of that, twelve trips a year seems to be also inadequate. Again, I will pick a number out of the air. I think there should be

at least eighteen which gives you one and a half trips per month. Like I say I just pulled that number out. As a citizen when I try to get a hold of my MHA, if I call and cannot get through, I find that if I can see that person say within a week or two, but if it is three or four weeks until the MHA gets back to me, I will probably almost have forgotten what I initially called about or the information I was seeking might be academic now because the date I needed it for might have been gone by or something. It is good to have the member in the district periodically and I think it is important that they be able to have more trips back and forth to their districts.

I was thinking of categorizing trips. I am sure MHAs have all kinds of needs and requirements in their districts that they have to get back and forth to. I thought well maybe we could make some kind of a system where certain types of trips are payable and others might not be. But I think you are getting into a can of worms with that so I left that. Just as an example, you want to get up to part of your district for a school graduation or some kind of a community meeting or there are just so many things that it is difficult to categorize them.

So in actual fact I think - what did I suggest, eighteen? - even that might be kind of low. Two a month might be even more adequate. I realize, of course, all of this costs money and we are the poorest Province. I do not like to be suggesting we are spending all kinds of more money but if you are going to do an adequate job I think you should have more access to your district and if you are in your district access to St. John's. But, of course, I think it would be necessary - maybe you have it now already - to draw up specific, fairly tight, guidelines as to what qualifies as trips. I do not know what kind of an accounting system you have to live by but it is important that this be kept close track of so members are not abusing it. There was somebody in Nova Scotia a couple of months ago, he lived nearby Halifax and claimed all kinds of money. There have to be controls. I do not know what kind of controls you do have now.

MR. FENWICK:
He was defeated in a subsequent election by a New Democrat, by the way. I just thought I had better include that information, just to dig the boys. There may be a way in which you are paid back for abusing the system.

MR. JESSO:
Yes. But then again that was one member. How many others -

MR. SIMMONS:
Peter is the fund of oddities.

MR. JESSO:
Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
At the present time - correct me if I am wrong - they are non-accountable are they not, the twelve trips?

MR. FENWICK:
Could we interrupt just for a second to ask a question about that. You are talking about accountable. I am not sure which way you mean. Accountable in terms of going back on a function that is legitimately that of yours as a member of the House, or accountable in terms of having

proper receipts and so on? Which do you mean? Or is it both?

MR. JESSO:
I think both. Let us just say, for example, I am a pretty slack member and I am a member of the Legislature. I am really not too much in touch with my district. It is kind of far to get to anyway and I am not really going to bother going out except once a month but I have twenty-four trips and I can claim for all of them whether I go or not. So that is the kind of accounting I would like to see, to be sure if people are making the trips back and forth to their districts that they be justified.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Oh, I see. In other words, sir, when you talk of accountability, you are talking about the member using it and getting there.

MR. JESSO:
Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
You are not talking, necessarily, about a purpose for him or her getting there.

MR. JESSO:
That is right, as with financial accountability.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
You are not nailing it down in terms of what might be perceived by some as politicking versus an honest to goodness constituency problem?

MR. JESSO:
Can you separate them?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Well, I argue that you cannot, but there are those who are consciously aware of that issue and who raise that issue from time to time. You know, if I am invited to a graduation, the graduation will go on if I do not get there. Some might argue that if I do not get there, it is not as good for me, as an individual politician. If there is no allowance provided for me to get there, if I am going to go, it is on my own pocket. So there is a tendency for some people to say, 'Well, we should not provide travel allowance to the extent where someone is going to politick.' And I am more or less on your side. How can you differentiate? Because, really, when a person is going out to visit someone in his constituency and to solve a problem, he is politicking then, even though that is what he is in there to do.

MR. JESSO:
Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
So it is very difficult to separate.

MR. JESSO:
Yes, but in my opinion, anytime a politician is seen, he is politicking simply by being present, so that the folks are saying, 'Oh, yes, here is Joe, he is back in the district.'

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Yes, Roger.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, I have heard Mr. Jesso say, in effect, in relation to the number of trips, that he would support up to twenty-four trips and that the member would not be entitled to twenty-four, but entitled to a number up to

twenty-four that he actually took to his district. He would not claim twenty-four and sit in St. John's, he could claim up to twenty-four, depending on how many he took to the district. That is what you are saying, is it not?

MR. JESSO:
Yes. I mean, let us just say, for example, coming up to the end of either the fiscal or the calendar year or whatever you go by, if he says, 'Well, I only took seventeen trips this year -

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes.

MR. JESSO:
- oh, boy! I can go home seven weekends in a row now!'

MR. CHAIRMAN:
In other words, you are saying, compensate the member for the trips he or she makes, not have a system wherein you can make five trips but collect for twelve. This is really what you are saying.

MR. JESSO:
Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I think that is reasonable.

MR. JESSO:
Because if I am espousing the fact that you should have more pay, it is not necessarily the fact that you should get this -

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Do it the other way.

MR. JESSO:
Yes, you should not have a set travel allowance if you are getting more pay. You get paid by the trips you take. You are getting a better salary now, according to me. That is all I wish to say on travel.

On accommodation - and, of course, again, I do not know what the present situation is, but it would seem to me that accommodation help is required for members who have to maintain two residences. And, of course, the maintenances of two residences, as far as I am concerned, should be documented in some way. I cannot just pretend I got an apartment back in Goose Bay, or wherever it might be. There has to be some documentation to show that I actually have that residence because if a member is from a rural riding but really does not live there and has no residence there, I would not want abuses where he pretended he had a residence back there that.

MR. FENWICK:
I do not want to interrupt but there is a per diem paid for members who do have residences outside of St. John's when they are in St. John's, an expense account of $59.40 per day.

MR. JESSO:
When the House is open.

MR. FENWICK:
Yes, when the House is open, it is only paid when the House is open. So there is some sort of accommodation for members from outside of St. John's, an allowance that is paid right now.

MR. SIMMONS:
My concern is, can a member who comes from far away afford on this allowance to maintain an apartment in St. John's?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
No. No.

MR. FENWICK:
I tried it and you cannot do it.

MR. JESSO:
In my opinion if you are going to be effective you have to have a half decent place to stay and not be worried about having some money left over to pay the mortgage back in Grand Falls or wherever you might live.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
We also have to say to you, Sir, again for clarification, neither can some members who have to travel from St. John's to their constituency when the House is open, make that trip and not be out of pocket. There are some classic examples of that. With the present arrangement, with the present expense allowance and the present per diem certain members, depending on the geographic area that they are representing, every time they go to their constituency are out of pocket. In other words, the system is not there to cover adequately or totally the expense that it takes to get them there and back.

MR. JESSO:
Putting myself in your shoes now it seems to me that if I am a member I want to be able to go and do my job and not be concerned overly about trying to maintain two residents, but I believe I should be entitled to an adequate apartment and still maintain my primary residence. I do not believe I should be forced to sell my residence back in the town I came from, that is my home, that is where my family is, etc., etc., so I do not know what kind of cost this would be. Now I have not costed it out but it would seem to me that it would be fair to provide members with an allowance that would allow them to maintain a basic apartment in the City of St. John's, not a luxury apartment, but your standard one bedroom apartment say. I think that would more that adequately help take care of you. Okay? And that is basically all I am going to say on accommodation. I think you should be given a liveable fee.

The fourth category is the area of clerical, secretarial, and research assistance. Now, I know least of all about this. I personally do not know what your requirements are and I am unaware of the day by day administration of your offices. I do not know if you have five secretaries for everybody or twenty-five for everybody, or one each.

MR. SIMMONS:
Half each.

MR. JESSO:
Half each.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Two members per secretary.

MR. JESSO:
I cannot comment on that. I do not know whether it is adequate or not.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
And two members per office in a number of situations.

MR. JESSO:
I simply cannot comment on that. I do now know whether it adequate or not. I will not pass a comment on that.

But in relation to that it seems to me that fifty-two members is probably too many. I think we have too many MHAs now, probably a little too much duplication but it is probably - let us be realistic - politically impossible to cut back. Which of you wants to cut your district and say, "Oh well, we do not need another MHA in this area". So I would like to see less but I do not think it is practical.

I am also concerned on how MHAs can deal with citizens on an individual basis in their district. You all do not have district offices. We are fortunate here in Corner Brook that I can get a hold to my MHA through the Sir Richard Squires building. There is an office space over there. I can go over there and meet with my MHA. But somebody from a rural district where there is no public building, I am not sure what we can do. I am simply expressing a concern here. I am not saying we put up constituency offices in all the districts. There are just too many districts and too many communities. I fear it would be a horrendous cost because of that. I am concerned about how constituents get in touch with their MHAs and where they can find a place to meet. Where do you meet? In the local lounge or the bar or the guy's living room or your living room? It is a concern I am sure that does not have an easy solution. But, as I say, I do not think we can probably afford to set up fifty-two district offices. I think that is about all I am going to say on that. Like I say in terms of clerical and administrative assistants I really cannot say very much on it at all.

My last point is the idea of how do you address these things on a regular basis. I think what you should do there, because you are going to take lots of flack if you are going to give yourselves some increases in pay and more travel allowance. You know if you took lock, stock and barrel what I am saying here is it would cost a lot of money. So you are going to be in for a bit of flack anyway. Is it possible to set up some kind of external permanent board to review these things, not necessarily every political term, but maybe every four or five years? Then they could have maybe a professional employee or two and could do your research for you in terms of what kinds of benefits and packages you should have. Then it would be just a matter of a four or five year renewal of this. It would not become political because the politicians would not decide. I do not know who could be on an external board. I have not gone so far as to say who should be on it. It would seem kind of strange for a civil servant. I do not know whether it should be completely non-government employees.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Are you talking about people coming from the professional sector, outside of government, with no contact or industry?

MR. JESSO:
Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Labour movement industry or whatever?

MR. JESSO:
Yes. Of course in times of restraint, I am suggesting you do all of the above and it not cost me any more tax dollars if you can perform that miracle. Anyway those are my points. I hope they assist you in your deliberations. I do not know if this is the place to raise it or not but I have one other point regarding the Legislature. It might be beyond your mandate.

MR. SIMMONS:
Try us.

MR. JESSO:
The Colonial Building. I am not jumping on Jim McGrath's bandwagon now but I think it is terrible the way that building is used. I do not necessarily believe that it should be the Legislature again. Nostalgically, I think it might be a good idea. I do not know how practical it would be but I think it is a good idea. But to use that building as a warehouse I think is unforgiveable. I have done a little bit of family research in the Archives down there on occasion and when I see what people are doing in places like Halifax and Fredrickton with their old Legislatures, dress up a few young students, give tours, tell the stories about the paintings on the ceilings and that kind of stuff - am I out of order here in saying that?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Oh, no. Very much on target.

MR. JESSO:
So I think it is a tragedy because provincially, tourism-wise and municipally St. John's is touted as an historic city. It brings in tourism dollars for us. It has one of the most historic buildings in the Province and it is a warehouse. Granted it is kind of a high class warehouse because our Archives are there. I am sitting down at this table in the Legislative Chamber and I am kind of overawed. Then I look over at the steel cabinets over there and say, "My God, what a waste!"

I ask you as MHAs, as members of our government, if there is anything you can do about that? It is necessary, I think, to erect or allocate adequate space. I am also concerned about the archives part of it to. Looking at the archives, I think, they are being inadequately housed and I think we should have a provincial archives. Either set space aside in some of your present buildings, build an archives, something or other.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you very much.

Just a couple of quick observations and then, I believe, there are a couple of questions. For clarification, would you agree in terms of your comments on the Colonial Building that the chamber be restored to a chamber as such, with the old desks and everything put in place? The Speaker's Chair is there right now, but the chamber be restored as an historic site and as a tourist attraction? That could be used, by the way, for House committees. The committees of the House are using it now but if the chamber was fully restored it could still be used.

One of the arguments against Mr. McGrath's proposition is that the members could not be crammed into that space and you would have to build an additional building for support services and access it with a tunnel or something like that. It is not our purpose at this time to debate that but if I am reading you accurately what you are talking about is quite achievable and possible and I do not think that the cost would be prohibitive. Whatever it would be I think it would bring back money because it is a tourist resource and an historic building. Also the fact that the archives, and I was Minister of Tourism for a while and had something to do with that, even if that building housed the political archives of the Province, because the National Convention and a whole range of things, and if it was the home of Hansard, which is the daily verbatim report of the Legislature, or wherever the Legislature is there is need for storage, need for proper filing and availability of the public of Hansard, so there is a host of things that that building could be put to use for other than what it is. I think your comments are both timely and appreciated by the committee.

I have one question for your, Sir, and then my colleagues, I am sure, have a couple. In relation to accommodations of members by way of office space. I gathered from your comments that you identify and appreciate the necessity for constituents to have access to their member of the House and I think that we can all support that. Would you agree that as a citizen when you visited St. John's from whatever district in the Province, either as a member of a delegation or as an individual with an urgent problem to see your MHA you expect to find your MHA in an office where there is confidentiality and privacy or would you be content to sit down in an office with an MHA where there is another MHA and maybe one of his or her constituents? In other words, what I am asking you is do you see the need for a private office for each member of the House in the Confederation Building, the annex, or both, aside from whatever facility there is in his or her constituency?

MR. JESSO:
I think I have only ever had one occasion where I spoke to my member in St. John's at the Confederation Building and I think that was in a hallway outside the Legislative Chamber, which was really less than adequate. I think that is the very least that a member should have an office, even if it is a very small one. We are providing office space for your professional employees in there and there are lots of various functionaries in the Confederation Building in our various offices and there is space provided them, why not for the legislators also?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
Do you know why he had you in the corridor? Because there was more privacy there than there was in the office. Had he taken the office there were other people there. So he is doing you a favour by having you in the corridor.

Mr. Jesso, I was very grateful as a member of the Committee for the time you have taken to come. I was very impressed with the thoroughness of your assessment of the current situation and your suggestions. And I get the sneaky feeling you are not nearly as uninformed about the subject as you pretended to be at the outset. I was especially able to identify with your sensitivity to political institutions both the physical building, the Colonial Building and the institution of the elected politician.

The salary issue you covered first and you covered it last in a way. The classic dilemma of any government is summed up in the phrases, one, "Taxpayers, do you want some more services?" "Yes". "Do you want to pay for them?" "No". Long before you made that concluding remark about doing all this without costing you more I had made a note about, suppose we accept your recommendation about the $40,000 salary. Two questions, how do you relate that to the current rhetoric, and I am showing my hand, current rhetoric about restraint, I think there is more rhetoric than reality, but how do you relate that to the current rhetoric or the current fad about restraint and current need for restraint, for that matter. And secondly, how do we package that? How do we sell it to the public? Will the public stand for it? Put it that way.

If you heard tomorrow the MHAs were going to put their salaries to $40,000, what would you think?

MR. JESSO:
That is a tough problem. As I stated, you are going to take flack if you are going to grant yourselves increases and give yourselves better travel allowances and better accommodation allowances. I can imagine it now. The media will just go crazy. They will have a field day, with all due respect to our media friends here. You will be just setting yourselves up as sitting ducks there and they will just take pot shots at you for a couple of weeks.

To be perfectly honest, I do not know how you can do it. You can minimize it by getting a compromise agreement where all parties can agree on it. As I said earlier, let us not have a great deal of pontificating knowing that you are getting the increase anyway. We hear lots of people talk about the government wasting all kinds of money. We hear various people saying that inside and outside the government but very few people get down to specifics. I do not know where money is being wasted. Every department, I assume, tries their best to control their budgets and the like. So I really do not know where you are going to come up with the money. I submit to you that is a problem. That is your problem and the Minister of Finance's problem. So I am just going to chuck that back at you.

MR. SIMMONS:
Okay. You also struck some chords with me on the issue of travel to the district. I am one of the people who is literally out of pocket every time I go into the district. On average a trip to the district costs about $250 to $300 if I go by car, if I do not pay any hotel bill, in other words, if I can find a friend I can stay with overnight - $250 to $300 - which means I am out of pocket about $100 each trip because our trips are based on mileage to a central point. So I can claim $200 and it costs me $300 or so if it is a short trip. If it is a trip more than two or three days, then the cost goes up proportionately. So the point is that the travel thing is an awkward situation financially. Just a comment there.

Now let us come to the issue of constituency offices and the general overall umbrella item of access to MHAs. You made the comment about how nice it was that you could go up to the Sir Richard Squires Building and you construed from that that that benefit came to you because you were urban as opposed to rural. Do you realize that if my brother, Scott Simmons, had been elected in Humber West that you would not be able to go up there and see him. The distinction is not between urban and rural but between government and Opposition. I just wanted you, as a person in the public, to realize how petty this system has become. We do not have to build any constituency offices anywhere in this country. There are three or four offices owned by the provincial Department of Social Services in my district but I am the wrong colour. I cannot go in and use them. Do you understand? In any constituency in this Province there are all kinds of offices owned and paid for by you, the taxpayer, all kinds of them. We do not have to incur one additional cent.

You heard the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) say earlier when there was a government member up there, there was a government member's office. So he, in his naivete at the time or perhaps in his brashness, I do not know, but for whatever reason, moved into the office and was kicked out, not because he did not represent people, but because he has the wrong colour. That is the kind of pettiness you are dealing with. It is not a question always of dollars and cents. Nobody is talking here about spending new millions. What I am talking about is spending the millions you are spending now a little more sensibly and a little less pettily, if that is the right term.

Are you saying, and my question is almost rhetorical, that the institution of the House ought to be just a little more divorced from government so that around the Province the institution known as the House of Assembly ought to have access to facilities which are made available to members irrespective of party? Is that what I hear you saying?

MR. JESSO:
Well, I have to be careful in making a response to that because if I make a positive response it implies I am agreeing with you and if I disagree it implies I am agreeing with the government side of the House. But I do agree that, I do not care who is in control because four years time the other party will be in. Just for your information, at various times I have voted for all three parties. I am your elusive voter that you guys are chasing come election time. But I do see the need for space. I do not care where it is provided.

MR. SIMMONS:
Now my preamble made it a loaded question. You are smart enough to take it like that, let me put it another way. Do you think that your access to your MHA ought to be clouded by his party label or ought you have equal access whether that MHA happen to be Liberal, Tory, or NDP? That is my question.

MR. JESSO:
It is irrelevant what party. To me it should be irrelevant what party he belongs to.

MR. SIMMONS:
But you are aware that the reality now it is clouded by that, that is what I am saying to you. It may sound like a partisan comment, but it is a fact of life in this province.

MR. JESSO:
Well I have wondered, I did not know for sure.

MR. SIMMONS:
Well, Peter tells you.

MR. JESSO:
So, okay. I know now.

MR. FENWICK:
To be fair to the government, I just want to give you the background on it. I complained that after I was locked out of my office, I was not actually physically thrown out, although I was hoping for something like that if we could the media out there. But the answer that I was given that it is not the government members office, it was the government members office who was the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Rural Agriculture and Northern Development. That was the answer I was given. The fact that he got the office about three months before he was appointed to that position I thought that sort of weakened their case somewhat. But the answer that you will be given for here in this Richard Squires Building is that these are Cabinet ministers and, it is in view of that position that they receive it.

The question that we had to ask, of course, was that Luke Woodrow did not hold any of those positions and also had an office up there. But Public Works response to it, just to give the background, was that he was given it by another minister who had the office rented for a department. It was allocated to another department.

Roger's comments are accurate. It is a situation where in some instances, some private members who have been on the government side have been able to access government offices. I have no complaints that private members have the offices. I think that when they are available, and the office that I was locked out of by the way is still empty up in Menihek, but my argument would be that when these offices are available they should be available for members to do that particular thing. It should not be on the petty basis that is there. I think that Rick is going to chime in with something about Deer Lake there.

MR. WOODFORD:
This is not suppose to be a forum for starting arguments and things like that. I just want to try to get away from that, but at the same time address what Mr. Simmons has said about the wrong colour thing. I take I am the right colour in the Deer Lake - Humber Valley area, although at times it is a bit distorted. But I do not have a constituency office in my district and like I said I am of the right colour. So granted what he is saying with regards to Corner Brook here is right, the three or four members are in close proximity, so it would probably make sense.

But any other areas of the Island, I do not know where, except for St. John's and Corner Brook itself. It would be news to me.

MR. SIMMONS:
Botwood, Lewisporte, Grand Falls, there are offices. Where there are incumbent MHAs usually.

MR. FENWICK:
In most cases, though, they are Cabinet ministers.

MR. WOODFORD:
They are Cabinet ministers, that is what I am saying. They have executive assistants, therefore, they would have the constituency offices. But we are talking about the backbenchers here now, really, and they have not, not for me to know. It is news to me if they do have offices in the Province. It would be nice and I am not saying

it is not right, I agree we probably should have them, but they are not there right now.

MR. JESSO:
Yes. Well, I am backing away from this a little bit because I detect partisanship and I did not come here to get -

MR. SIMMONS:
No, sure, it is an aggravating issue. I tried to put it in an umbrella sense to elicit your view. I think we have your view and it is my view on this particular issue, that the House of Assembly ought to be treated as an institution in itself, and if the people of Humber West or St. Barbe elect a particular member, he is the member for that district. He is the member for all the people. He ought to have the same facilities to do his work as though he were of another party. Now, that is the concern I am articulating. The examples I quote are just examples, Rick. For Lewisporte, Jim Russell is a minister, Botwood, Hugh Twomey is a minister; the fact is, both of them had those offices at least three or four years before they became ministers. So, you know, I could take you right across the Province. It is rife in that particular respect, but the principle is what we are talking about. We are not here to bicker among ourselves or with the witnesses. But if the public will stand for that, if the public will say, 'We like the win or take all concept; that is tough luck, Simmons, if you are in Opposition,' so the government gets all the largess and people who are stupid enough to elect Opposition MHAs can suffer the consequences, if that is the public view out there, well, then, that guides what we can recommend to the House of Assembly. I suspect the public view is different. I suspect the public view is 'We have a right to elect whom we want to be our MHA, and once he is elected, we do not want him and therefore, us, to be punished because he has a particular party stripe as opposed to another party stripe.' It is in that context that I pursue this issue. I think it is an important one and, depending on what the public - and you are a member of the public - say to us, we can then report to the House of Assembly accordingly.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
I would like to make a couple of observations on this matter, because I think it would be very wrong for us to go away from here believing that there is some conspiracy on the part of this government or any other government. I am in the unique position where I have been in and out. I want to say very candidly that I have not been party to, nor have I heard or been part of any discussion in fourteen years as a minister which conspire to make life miserable for, make a member less efficient in the eyes of his or her constituents because of a party label. I have to call the shots not only as I see them but as I know them, as I accurately recall them, because I was one of them. It is just folly for me - and I am not, you know, a spokesman for government these days. But I have to be honest and true to my own principles of calling the shots as I see them. I will nail the government constructively where I believe they need to be nailed, but I will not sit around and have a government labeled as conspiring in some devious way to hold on to office by very unfair practices at

the expense of the taxpayer. That is not true. You know, that is contemptible. That is not a fact.

Now I will acknowledge what Mr. Simmons says, and what Mr. Fenwick says. What they have said in reality is a fact with regards to the appropriation of accommodations and office space, but the motive or reasons behind them are the principles by which we are discussing here today. I cannot be party to, nor will I ever agree, because to do so I will be saying that I was just as bad as the rest because I am collectively repsonsible for those decisions. I tell you infinitely and truthfully that is not so. What is wrong I suggest Mr. Jesso, and I think it is important because you have come along today of your own time and your own violation and I for one, and I am sure my colleagues from all parties, appreciate your candid comments. What is important here and what the issue is, it seems to me, and this is a criticism of the government and a criticism of myself, as a former minister. It seems to me that when I was a minister I was so close to the forest that maybe I did not see the trees, so caught up in my ministry that I was in charge of that I did not see clearly the necessity for more services for the backbencher, for the member of the Opposition, as the MHA. I think that those comments are appropriate to the existing members of Cabinet and I defend it and I do not say this as a criticism of them as much as the reality and the acknowledgement of the role they find themselves in as the governing body of the Province which flows from the Legislation.

Finally, let me suggest to you, what is needed to resolve this issue is a very deliberate change of approach in terms of the perception by Cabinet of the larger institution known as the Legislature and the role of members of the Legislature to perform functions over and above what the Cabinet does on behalf of the people, the taxpayers and the citizens that we all represent. I think if we are able to, with your help, as you have so clearly and definitively outlined and elucidated on some of those issues today, if we are able to convey that by way of recommendation to our colleagues in government and bring about a change of approach in that, I think that will solve the problem. I honestly and truly, my last word, do not believe and cannot accept and therefore cannot accept any responsibility for when I was a minister of conspiring to do any of those things or bring about any of those very unsatisfactory situations which both Mr. Fenwick and Mr. Simmons have referred to.

MR. SIMMONS:
I promise to have my final word on it to. I do not subscribe to the conspiracy theory but being of at least maybe average intelligence I find myself jumping to conclusions I must admit when I see Steve Mulrooney, Opposition member, Exploits, no office; I see Hugh Twomey, government member, backbencher, office; I see Freeman White, Opposition member, Lewisporte, no office; and next month I see Jim Russell, government member elected, office; I see your predecessor, Peter Walsh, government member, office; Peter Fenwick, elected the next month, Opposition member, no office.

Now perhaps it is all sheer

coincidence that all the government in those three seats have the offices and all the Opposition members did not get the offices and it happened in both directions, no office to office or going from an office to no office in the case of Menihek. That is the point I was making. I do not think we needed to have dragged it out, Mr. Chairman, as far as we did but this gets into a situation where if you feel your views strongly, I feel my view equally strongly. I think at that point we should just lay it to rest. I would like for a conclusion that we have to find a way to get a new attitude, a new approach, to this.

I think it is not thoroughly unsavoury that members of the public, including the press, see this little vignette, this little insight into what the real tensions are. We can fool ourselves as a Committee that everything is hunky-dory. We can make all the recommendations we want but if there is not there a will to proceed in a particular direction things will not change. If there is not too a public support for the direction in which we are going - and that is why I put it in black and white just now - I said, "If the public attitude is the winner take all and tough luck, Simmons, you are in Opposition so sit in an office with another guy, with only one desk because there was not room to get the second one in there and duck the rain as it comes through the ceiling and keep moving your mail so it does not get wet", if that is the public's concept of how they want their taxpayers' money spent, I guess that is the reality we live in. But if the concept is we have an institution called Parliament, called the House of Assembly and we are going to send a group of men and women in there to represent us, and we want them to have the capacity to represent us equally well, whether they are Tory, Liberal, NDP or anything else, if that is the message the public is sending me, then that is going to affect what kind of recommendations we make on this Committee.

So I think, Mr. Chairman, it is not thoroughly negative that some members of the public have seen this difference of view on this particular issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
One short, swift question Mr. Jesso. Mr. Simmons touched on it and I guess perception is, I say, whether I am right or wrong, perception very often is 75 per cent and how any member of the public perceives an initiative is, I suppose, what carries today. It does not have to be accurate. It does not have to be correct but perception does certainly have a real effect and that might very well be what we are into here.

My question to you, Sir, just for clarification, because we will be reviewing the tapes in making our recommendations, you have said that in your view a salary of $40,000 for members of the House is both necessary and reasonable. I just want to ask you one question on that. Am I right in assuming that when you say that you mean that a member of the House, aside from what it costs him or her to visit a constituency to do his or her job, that the salary of $40,000 should be there to be taxable or whatever like yours is, like someone elses is, that that $40,000 salary is a salary as such, with no deductions over and above the normal which comes out of yours for pension, for group life, and for everything else. In other words that is not including any expenses per se, no expenses including in that the expenses aside from that? Is that fairly accurate?

MR. JESSO:
Yes I believe so.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
In other words a gross salary of $40,000 and constituency expenses or office expenses or whatever else aside from that.

MR. JESSO:
Yes. Or my alternative was to take an average of the other provinces. The $40,000 I mentioned was just a number I picked out of the air which seems to me to be a more than adequate salary. Then of course other perks be eliminated, payment for serving on committees, like a small one or a large one. That is just part of your job.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes. Let me just conclude by saying that I think, whether you know it or not, you are pretty close to target. If you take an average of the other provinces you would find it seems to me, if my memory serves me correctly, an average salary for a member of the House would probably be in the vicinity of somewhere between $40,000 and $45,000.

RECORDING EQUIPMENT FAILURE

MR. JESSO:
- and make a professional living at it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Right.

MR. JESSO:
There are lots of folks who want your job, every election.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
That is right.

MR. JESSO:
And everybody from here to Cape Spear thinks he can do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes.

MR. JESSO:
So you are not perceived as having an exceptional, and I use the word very broadly, exceptional skills. Everybody thinks, "Oh, yes, anybody can be an MHA, anybody who aspires for a political life." So there is part of your problem. It is just a matter of supply and demand. Lots of folks do not see the need probably.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
We appreciate your comments and for another reason too I think, and it has been said earlier this morning, I think it is very appropriate that a lot of this gets one into the various target groups that we are able to attract people from certain target groups. And you yourself I believe made some reference to it. In other words, to be a member of the House should be open to all the population and salary or the compensation package should not be a factor. In other words, it should not be confined to the very wealthy and they should not be confined to a professional who is able to carry on a profession and still be a member of the House. It should not be a part-time situation, it should be a full-time.

MR. JESSO:
And neither should it be so high that all kinds of people are going after it simply because it looks

like a big wad of money or a great way to earn a lot of money.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Right. I agree, Sir. I agree.

Let me on behalf of the Committee thank you very, very much for coming and I am sure I speak for myself and I am sure I can speak for the Committee too that your contribution to us today has been both appreciative and informative. I know it will help us in our deliberations in coming up with some final recommendations. Thank you very much.

MR. JESSO:
Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
This meeting stands adjourned until 2:30 p.m.

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The Committee resumed at 2:30 p.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Order, please!

The next gentleman who has come along and given of his time to contribute to this exercise is Mr. Wayne Trask, President of the Institute Of Chartered Accounts.

Mr. Trask please take your seat up here.

I will just briefly say a couple of things before you start. The terms of reference of the Committee are broad and established by the Legislature to look into, to investigate, and report upon by the first week in November issues relating to accommodations. What we mean by that, of course, is office space, offices, secreterial services, research resource services, compensation, in one form and another, sessional indemnity and other benefits, pension or whatever else, for members of the House of Assembly.

As I indicated to the people who appeared this morning before the Committee, there is precious little that you can not say or get into within those broad terms. It is pretty well wide open and pretty well all embracing.

So in this context, therefore, we welcome you on behalf of members of the Committee. We thank you very much for taking your time and coming along and sharing with us your considered opinions and views on the issues that we are attempting to investigate.

You are on Sir.

MR. TRASK:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, lady and gentlemen. I offer my comments to you today as President of The Institute of Chartered Accountants with Newfoundland, representing almost 400 chartered accountants from public practice, industry, government and education.

May I, at the outset, Mr. Chairman, apologize for the brevity of my report, as your August 19, letter inviting me to make recommendations was not received by me until August 28, which allowed me only four working days to research the matter, correlate the facts and write my report.

Also, due to time pressures I am

limiting my comments on the accommodations of the members to the following brief statement: We feel that all of the members of the House of Assembly are entitled to adequate office accommodations supported by a competent, qualified staff together with proper office equipment that will enable them to carry out their duties and their responsibilities as elected representatives of their districts. This is no more or no less than any efficient, capable business manager is entitled to in any other organization.

On the matter of benefits and remuneration, I would point out that as resource and source material I utilize the "Departmental Salary Details" booklet which is a supplement to the 1985-1986 Estimates, as well as the Canadian Legislatures 1984 comparative study of the various Legislatures across the country, and the April 1984 survey of income and benefits of chartered accountants, which was undertaken by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Newfoundland.

The Institute feels that if top quality, high calibre candidates are to continue to be attracted to and then to remain in these higher office, then adequate remuneration must be paid.

The Premier and his fellow members of the House are in effect running the largest business organization in this Province. It is also an organization that carries an awesome set of responsibilities, from overseeing the health care of our people, to managing the entire provincial economy, to educating our youth, etc. We can no longer expect these members to govern for less than equitable remuneration.

The Institute feels that members' salaries should be tied to the executive pay plan of the provincial government.

It is my understanding that originally the government ministerial positions were not just perceived as full time paid positions and therefore the remuneration level was set in accordance with the part-time nature of the job. However, today it is obvious that most, if not all ministers work their full eight hours and then some, every day. The same can also be said for many, many private members as well.

A reasonable pension plan is, we feel, an integral part of any pay or benefit package. However, due to the limited time available to me and because of the specialized knowledge required to thoroughly analyze the various plans and their options, I am not prepared to comment on the adequacy of same at this time. I do wish to say however that the career of a politician is generally a short one, the present company accepted. For instance, the average years of service at the time of the September, 1984 federal election was 6.1 years for elected members to the House of Commons in 1980.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
I am sorry, six point what?

MR. TRASK:
6.1 years. After the election, the average dropped to 4.7. If you wish to draw an analogy to a N.H.L. hockey player, their average is 4.1 and their salaries are considerably more than yours, I might add.

There is always the risk of not

being re-elected, and, furthermore, an elected member will be leaving behind a career that he may or may not be able to rejoin after his political career is over. All of these factors must be considered in determining what is a fair and reasonable pension plan that is designed especially for members of the House of Assembly.

At the present time members outside of the Capital region are receiving, I understand, $59.40 a sitting day as an accommodation allowance. It would appear that this amount is insufficient, especially for members who do not have a permanent residence in St. John's. The average hotel room in St. John's costs approximately $70.00 per day and meals, and gratuities and other items would probably run the total to something over the $100.00 per day.

Mr. Chairman, I found it somewhat ironic that some civil servants are actually paid more than the people they work for. From my review of the various departmental salary charts I noted that the highest paid civil servants are receiving in the order of $65,000 to $75,000 per annum in salary, while the minister of that same department receives only $30,160 per annum in salary.

Even after considering the basic indemnity of $15,348 and the tax-free allowance of $7,674, the total remuneration other than travel and accommodations (which of course all civil servants receive when they travel) is still only $53,182 or some 20 per cent to 30 per cent less than the deputy minister who works for him.

A further comparison with industry standards demonstrates clearly that ministers of the Crown are significantly underpaid. For example, the Auditor General and the Comptroller General are both chartered accountants and they are presently receiving $67,348.00 per annum. This compares favourably to the average salary paid to forty-six equally qualified chartered accounts who responded to the April 1984 income survey prepared by the institute. They were receiving an average - and this was almost a year and a half ago - of $69,340 per annum. The Minister of Finance on the other hand will receive only $53,182 this year. This is considerably below the average.

For clarification I should also point out that neither the minister, nor the Comptroller General, nor the Auditor General, would be entitled to some of the very interesting and additional benefits that CAs reported they received. For instance, over 60 per cent of chartered accountants in industry have either a company car or a car allowance. Almost two thirds of chartered accountants, from industry again, are participating in some form of bonus, plan or profit-sharing plan. I do not think that is happening at the government level.

The same analogy can be made for all MHAs. A private member receives a basic indemnity of $15,348 and a tax free allowance of $7,674 for a total of $23,022. We feel that this amount of salary is totally inadequate compensation for our duly elected representatives. The greater majority of our fifty-two members are business people, lawyers, doctors, school teachers, or represent some other professional or quasi-professional body, and, therefore, would have been earning far in excess of the $23,022 that they now earn as MHAs.

In summary, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Newfoundland wishes to go on record as a strong supporter of a larger, more equitable remuneration level for all members of the House. Capable, competent, and qualified leadership is expensive, however, in the long run we feel that they will pay for themselves. To insure that this Province has top-notch leadership, we all must be prepared to pay for it. Furthermore we feel that these matters should be dealt with expeditiously.

If I or any member of my institute, Mr. Chairman, may be of any further assistance or offer you any additional information and explanations, please do not hesitate to ask at this time or at any future time.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you very much, Mr. Trask. A couple of observations and then there might be some questions for you. Let me say that I apologize for the fact that the letter got to you so late or it took so long for it to get to you. I certainly have found your presentation interesting in a number of ways.

Your comparison between the remuneration of public servants, especially at the Deputy Minister level, versus a minister, has been a matter which has arisen many times over. It begs questioning for a variety of reasons. It is contradictory to what is a standard procedure within the government service, hence I find your recommendation very interesting, that the salaries be tied to the Government Executive Pay Plan, because within the government service there is a standard policy that no public servant work for someone who is paid $1.00 less than themselves. In other words, wherever there is a situation uncovered where a supervisor, at whatever level, is supervising a section, a division, or an office, and any person within that area that he or she is supervising is making more than there is an automatic initiative by Treasury Board and Classification and Pay to bring about a resolve which places the supervisor or manager above by at least one step on the executive pay scale so as to correct what they call a unique situation.

At the same time while that is happening, as you so very clearly pointed out, the deputy minister and, in some instances assistant deputy minister, because all deputy ministers, as you know, are not paid the same. There are high flight deputy ministers or high paid deputy ministers in relation to the public service, unlike ministers which are all paid the same. Deputy ministers and in some instances assistant deputy ministers make more than the combined salaries of their minister as a minister per se plus as a member of the House of Assembly.

For a long time, going back over a number of years that I can recall, the justification for it was that if you took the combined salary, with the exception of maybe a couple of situations - one that comes to mind would be Justice where the Deputy Minister, for a variety of reasons, would by necessity be a lawyer and so the deputy minister in that department might have been paid some extra money - but the justification was that the combined salary of ministers and members of the House of Assembly - wearing both hats - was more than the official, the deputy minister. That certainly does not apply today.

I have one question for you, Sir, before I pass it over to my colleagues. We have a couple of support staff, as you know, and Mr. Dewling asks me to raise a question with you about whether we can obtain a copy of your survey on the income of chartered accountants. Is that possible, is that available?

MR. TRASK:
Yes, it is.

MR. HICKEY:
Okay, we would appreciate that. So Doug you can have a chat with Mr. Trask and see how that might be made available. We are gathering whatever information we can so as to put together a packahge with the report and have a backup file, so to speak, on which recommendations will be based.

MR. TRASK:
Before you pass it over, Mr. Chairman, I would point out that that salary survey was prepared in the Spring of 1984 and, therefore, it is almost a year and a half old.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
It is outdated now.

MR. TRASK:
We have not been on the zero/zero policy.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Right. Thank you very much. You remind me of one other thing and when you are responding to somebody else you might find an opportunity to answer this. You mentioned that some action be taken expeditiously based on your recommendations, is it fair for me to assume then that you are taking into account the environment of restraints that the Province is in, and also the fact that we are in a wage freeze which runs for another few months. We come out of the freeze as I understand it March. We are into the second year and I believe it is two years old in February is it not, February or March? Yes.

MR. LUSH:
It sounds a lot older than that.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Okay, so you are making on behalf of your organization, you are making your recommendations knowledgeable of the wage freeze and also the restraints environment as I said in which we have been functioning for the last number of years. Thank you, Sir. Any questions?

MR. FENWICK:
I have one.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
MR. Fenwick.

MR. FENWICK:
A personal question first, are you related to Glen Trask?

MR. TRASK:
A cousin.

MR. FENWICK:
I thought I noticed something of a family resemblance there.

The only question I had really was, and it is somewhat peripheral I guess, is that we have received some reports on the former occupations of members of

Parliament, for example, and members of the House. I was trying to recall in my own mind how many people in our House had come from, for example how many of them had formerly been either chartered accountants or lawyers and so on. The more I think about it the harder it becomes to find any, other than people like Bill Marshall, for example, who is a lawyer and has been there for a long time. Ed Roberts of course is no longer in the House. Is there something about the circumstances that it is keeping people, chartered accountants, for example, from offering themselves for public office?

MR. TRASK:
I can only offer comments on my own personal feelings and I have been approached to consider running for both federal and provincial politics and I have basically decided, (a) I cannot afford it at this stage in the game at least; (b) I am not sure if I want to subject my family to the abuse that you people have to take; and (c) I do not know if I am tough skinned enough to be able to sit in the House and take what you take and give what you give. What I see is a tough, tough job and while I may or may not be competent or qualified to do it at this stage of my life I guess for those two main reasons, my family and my present income level, I cannot afford to take a cut in pay.

MR. FENWICK:
We do not have any chartered accountants in the House now do we?

AN HON. MEMBER:
No.

MR. FENWICK:
No, there are none.

MR. TRASK:
What you find is that there are six chartered accountants in the House of Commons and if you will check back you will find that those six are probably either senior partners of national firms and therefore are - well they are bringing in pension income, there are other ways of getting remuneration beside what they are getting in parliament, and obviously all you people are aware of the fact that parliamentarians in Ottawa are paid a lot more than you people are.

MR. FENWICK:
Almost as much as you guys are.

MR. TRASK:
Well, do not forget this is the average, some of us are lower and some of us are higher. The $67,000 is related to the year in which you receive your CA as well and both the Comptroller General and the Auditor General fit into a particular category when they receive their CA and this is the category from which we choose the comparative numbers. If you did comparable numbers for a CA who just graduated last year or the year before, whatever, obviously the numbers are not even close to that.

By the way I was a little concerned with giving the impression that we were indicating Chartered Accountants were making lots of money. We do not think we are making enough. If I drew the comparison one step further, I talked about the Minister of Finance who is a doctor. If he was practicing as a doctor I am sure he would make considerably more than the average chartered accountant makes.

MR. FENWICK:

That is the only question I have.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Lush.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman, more than a question, I just want to make a comment Mr. Trask on your brief presentation. It might have been brief but it is for sure to the point and certainly fairly well documented. You mentioned, I think, in talking about the salaries why they are at the level that they are at because for many, many years politicians were not considered, in Newfoundland in particular, to be full-time politicians. They were lawyers and businesspeople and it became a part-time thing. I would venture to say, and I was just thinking in my mind as you were making that statement, I would think that possibly it must be close to 100 per cent of our Legislature now is full-time politicians. There may be just one or two, I can think of one who probably is not a full-time politician but it is certainly close to 100 per cent and that is certainly a dramatic change. To the people there now, by and large, this income is their income. And it has been that way for a few years.

I have been in politics for nine years and if I had followed the normal route that I should have I would be into eleven. I wrestled with the same thing that you talked about, wrestling with the thought of giving up a career and then running the risk of going back some years later and taking my chances whether I would get back or not. I did that. I surely did not get back at the same level that I left and I found my way back into politics again. But I can certainly appreciate what you have said with respect to career change and the risk.

Another enlightening figure for me was the lack of longevity of politicians, the 6.1 years for the House of Commons and then, I think, back to four after the election.

MR. TRASK:
Four point seven.

MR. LUSH:
Four point seven. I am on my ninth. I do not know how that works for provincial politicans but I am almost doubling the longevity of our federal counterparts. So I have no question other than, as I say, to commend you for the excellent brief in the short time that you had. It certainly showed that you had well documented the areas on which you commented upon.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Any other questions? I have one final question. Mr. Trask, a very general question, a number of people who came to see us this morning and were good enough to pass along their views raised two issues. I was glad they did because the Committee, although faced with time constraints, nevertheless was concerned about the whole institution of Legislature. It has not undergone great change over the years. There have been some changes. There is a committee system in place which has still got some problems but I think it has some problems because it is new. I am sure that in time those things will be sorted out. It has changed in numbers of the Legislature.

Aside from that there has not been a great deal of change and I, for one, have wondered and I am sure my colleagues share some of my concerns, that in the 1980's and in the next couple of decades, with the kinds of decisions that are before us, it is probably timely that the institution itself be looked at and the mechanism by which final decisions are made be evaluated and assessed with a view to change, obviously a change for the better, for the improvement of the process.

My question to you therefore is in two parts: One, the magic number of fifty-two members. Some people today have raised that question and said that that is too many, that that should be reduced, etc. I would like any view that you have or any opinion you have on that. Two, I would like your opinion on what your assessment is of what public perception of the Legislature is. In other words, how are members of the Legislature in your view perceived by an enquiring and suspicious public? Have you any point of view or have you any opinion on that? Have you run across some situations which can enable you to share something with us on that? Because that matter also has been raised.

__MR. TRASK:__
Well, I will answer your second question first. I guess my response is perhaps weighed somewhat by the fact that I have read that 1984 Legislature review and there are some numerous charts and schedules in there that indicate the response across Canada as to how people feel about their elected Legislatures, particularly the House of Commons The opinion was almost universally rather low. If you wish I can leave this report with you. You probably have a copy of it as well. It is unfortunate that this is so. I think this is probably commonplace. This is probably the general perception amongst the community at large. I think it is unfortunate. It happens because of the old story of doing 100 good things but do one bad and the bad one is the one that gets reported. Regardless of what happens in the House or at the Confederation Building or whatever of a positive nature, I think it is sensationalism. Unfortunately, you people are suffering from the same disease that the general public suffers from.

I think it rather unfortunate, for instance, that our local paper sees fit to publish the name of a fellow who may have had one indiscretion and ends up losing his licence because of drunk driving. The second time around it would not be quite so lenient, but the first time around, I think, he is probably paid enough by just losing his licence and the public disgrace and so on. I think it is not necessary. But, anyway, they do it and that is their prerogative. It is the freedom of the press.

You people are in much the same boat, I think. It is unfortunate that so many good things do get done. Also I noticed in this report that, I think it said something to the effect that you have to have a lot of patience to be a legislator. That things take a long, long, long time to change. So the general public looks at it and says, "well, look, if I want to buy a house I just decide I want to buy a house and I go buy a house." You cannot do that. You have a tremendous number of committees to go through. You have a myriad set of rules and regulations that have to be followed and so on. So once again the perception to the public is, you know, "these fellows are dragging their tails and they got nothing better to do." It is unfortunate, but, I think, that is basically the reason that you are perceived by the general public in somewhat of a negative light.

In the matter of fifty-two, we talked about fifty-two at the Institute's Provincial Council level talked about the fifty-two. In terms of cost justifying a raise, if you will, and I am sure this matter has probably been raised before as well. But if you people are making $23,000 a year and we do not want to charge any more to the Provincial purse, in simple mathematics, cut it back to 26 and you can have a $46,000 and it does not cost us any more. I mean you can work numbers to suit your own benefit.

I am not qualified to comment on the fifty-two. It is based primarily I understand on population and geography. Mr. Fenwick, for instance, represents probably the largest riding, spread over a wide geographical area. Maybe he should have two members for that district. I do not know.

You go to St. John's and they have, I do not know, 50,000? I do not know how many they have in districts in St. John's, but there are three or four times as many people and only one member. How do you rationalize it? I do not really know, I am not qualified to answer it. I do not have a hang up with fifty-two. Looking at the other Legislatures across the country, it is not out of whack. It is high by comparison with the population. But we also have a pretty big Province to cover and to govern. So, on the fifty-two members, I do not have a comment to make as such whether to raise it or to lower it. I just offer those -

MR. FENWICK:
They have thirty-two, by the way, in Prince Edward Island.

MR. TRASK:
If you look at P.E.I., it has what, a fifth of our population?

MR. FENWICK:
125,000.

MR. TRASK:
It is about a tenth of the size, I suppose, in terms of geography.

MR. FENWICK:
Nova Scotia as 52 as well, the exact same number, which is almost coincidence, but, of course, it has what, 300,000, 400,000 more people?

MR. TRASK:
But you have to have a minimum level. I have seen some organizations that I have been involved with over the years, I mean, if you want the best, you have to have a certain minimum number from which to choose committees or Cabinet members of whatever the case may be. So fifty-two does not particularly bother me. Does that answer your question?

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Yes, very much so. I will make just one observation before you leave and that is I agree with you if the motivator of raising he issue of the magic number of fifty-two as it applies to us is to look at the monitoring package then, of course, to me it is

completely unjustifable because for the simple reason that you do not justify improving the monetary situation by reducing the numbers. If the numbers are too large, than let us look at it from the point of view of duplication and it being unnecessary or where our people can be represented adequately by less which results in some savings. I do not think there is a justifable reason at all for tying it into how much you pay members. I am sure that when the number of fifty-two was arrived at it had nothing at all to do with cost. It was based on what was adequate in terms of representing our people both from a geographical point of view, in terms of travel distance, and also matters of isolation and matters of services and so on as opposed to some.

I think your example of some of the outlying districts in rural Newfoundland versus districts in St. John's, that issue was brought to bear when the legislation was put in place to create the fifty-two seat Legislature. Three commissioners are appointed every five years, I believe, under the law and there is a bottom and a top or a high and a low in terms of population. I think the high is 11,000 voters. You cannot go beyond that, or come down below that. So there are parameters in there. In any event, I appreciate your point of view. You raised it simply because it has been raised this morning. It has not necessarily been an issue in terms of the mandate of the Committee but then again the mandate of the Committee is broad.

Sir, in behalf of my colleagues I thank you very, very much for taking the time out and I thank you for what you said was a brief. As Mr. Lush said, it might have been brief, but it got to the point and there was plenty of meat. I thank you very, very much.

MR. TRASK:
Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Now then, the next gentleman is Mr. Dexter Fudge. Sir, I welcome you to the Committee and I thank you on behalf of my colleagues for taking time out today from your schedule and coming along and sharing some views with us on these matters. I do not believe I need say anything before you start because you have been here and you have heard pretty well what we are all about and why we are here. So in your leisurely way, or whatever way you wish, you can commence and share with us your point of view.

MR. FUDGE:
Mr. Chairman, Committee members and lady, today I welcome the opportunity to come before you to discuss the matter of your salaries.

I am here to represent myself personally and some of the organizations that I represent within the labour force. I have been asked already why I would come here looking to increase your salaries when you have put in a zero/zero wage freeze. How can I justify that? I can only say to them that I was not in agreement with the wage freeze and nor should it have any effect on whether you people get a raise or not.

The first thing I want to say to you is I have had quite a bit of experience with this because of the Bowater situation. When you get in there and get out in the public eye a little bit, a lot of people will approach you and ask you to do some things for them like run for office and the rest. I am not saying that I was asked to run for office and I am not saying that I qualified to sit where you are. But I am saying that I have taken a look at the situation and, just from a personal point of view, I would have to leave a $43,000-a-year job to go into a $23,000-a-year job, which is very unreasonable.

I also took into consideration, after being tied up in the Bowater situation, and being with you people for quite a number of days and years, that I could not afford your dress code, nor could you drive a 1980 rusted-out chevette. You would have to have a little better car. At least you have to look and act the part if you are in there. How you do it on $23,000 a year is beyond me.

I would like to give you my salary and let you handle it for a while. I would be a millionaire if I could do that on what you are making.

The other thing I would like to comment on is the way that you are paid in lump sums. I would not be able to handle that because I do not think that anybody should be given a certain amount of money that has to last them a certain length of time and then have to go and borrow to get them through the rough spots until the next payment comes in. I think that is not fair to ask that of people. I commented on your problem with your dress code and the rest that we put you into. You have to live up to a certain image. It is quite expensive to be there. Not only considering that, but being around a politician for a while, I saw everybody who had a function wanting him to attend and everybody who had a ticket to sell expecting him to buy one. Every time I went into a bar, people felt that you had an expense account that was beyond somebody's dreams and they wanted a round brought or they wanted dinner brought. I would not want to have to sit in your position and do your job. I do not know if I could handle it.

I really think that you should strongly go back and stress the point that there has got to be a raise in pay. To even attract somebody from the working force or any profession, unless you are a businessman and have businesses on the side, then I cannot see how you can afford to sit there.

The other factor is that if you are in for one term or two terms and then you do not get back in after that, where do you go, especially if you are over that magic figure of thirty-nine or even thirty-five today. I think there should be some legislation in place whereby - almost like the armed forces - if you go in to serve your Province, then you should be able to return to your former occupation with no penalties on you.

In order for me to run for office I would have to come out of a $43,000 a year job with no benefits, unless I am going to be put back in the second time or the third time, come out and find that I have negotiated in my collective agreement, yes, a stipulation that I can run for public office and for one term only and then go back to the work force. It is very difficult to negotiate that in a collective agreement when you have so many other things sitting there that are a major priority. When you are looking for one thing on a collective agreement, then you have to give up something else, no matter how small or what is there. It is very difficult to put it in. You are not going to get into the collective agreement to get a total membership approval for somebody to come back and pick up the seniority bit. So in order for me, just personally, to run I would have to come out of office and go behind all the rest of the people in the plant who have worked ahead of me. Then, if you have had automation come into your job, you would find out that you might be out on the street with no job. That is an awful lot to ask of a working man or woman for the small pay that you receive.

Secondly, I do not agree with the way that the members are treated by not having an office. I have had to deal with members who did not have an office to go to during the Bowater situation. We met in corridors. We met in restaurants and, in some cases, I have had to hire the room to have the meeting. That is unfair. We have been fortunate in this area to have people in who have their office. It is very nice to be able to go up and sit down in the office and be able to talk with the member, putting your views across to him without being interrupted. How somebody in another area does it who does not have an office and has got to go to a bar or resort to some other place, I do not know, to be truthful. When there are offices there that could be utilized, there is no need for it. I do not think the people in Labrador or any other part of Newfoundland should have any less than what I have in Corner Brook or whether I have a minister there or whether there happens to be a provincial building with an office provided in it. I do not think those people should be subjected to any less than the privileges that I have. I do not ask any more of my government than to treat the people there fairly and give me an opportunity to go in and sit down and discuss my business with the them in private.

Thirdly, I could not run for office on twelve free trips a year. In order to be able to serve the people who have elected me in. I have taken a look at that. That is if you live any distance from St. John's. You could possibly do it within your own area. Some people do not need twelve free trips because they are sitting right on top of their constituents. But for the people who are living outside of St. John's and their constituents are outside then they need more travel time in order to do the same job that you would do for your constituents who are living in your area.

I heard you ask Mr. Trask just now about credability or how the public views the candidate. Heck, if he does not have an office and he does not have the travel time, then how can you sit and ask how he is judged. It is very unfair for him to be judged and he does get that negative attitude because he has not got the time. He just cannot afford to come out there. So right off the bat I have put him into an office where he has got some strikes against him already. Lord knows his pay is small enough, but then I want him to travel on nothing and I am going to peanalize him that way. Then I am not going to give him an office to help knock him down further and with the job that he has got, that he takes on, it is a very responsible job and he has got to do that job for his constituents and for the people who elected him.

I do not have to tell you what it is like because I know what it is like sitting in the labour force and being within the union when somebody cries they have a problem. No matter if he has a million dollars and live in a mansion or he has a shack down on the track, he is still just as important as that man with the million dollars. His problem is just as big to him as what it is the other fellow.

So in order to attract people into government from all walks of life so that we can have a better way of life and a better government then something has got to be done, not only with the pay level, but with the man leaving the work force and returning to the work force. We do not need all businessmen nor do we need all labourors in there. We need a cross section.

For a while when I listened to some of the speakers I felt that there were going to be some objections to a salary increase. I can see everybody realizes the situation and can see how a person goes in there and how he can survive on the type of salary you get, I will never know. I just could not go there. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you very much, Mr. Fudge.

I am sure there might be some question from my colleague. Let me just say that we appreciate your very candid and very forthright comments. You have addressed the question of the wage freeze, and I appreciated that because that is very much a consideration.

I think most importantly you have addressed the question of accommodations in terms of offices, and that is one of the most critical issues facing the Committee, that the Committee has to deal with both on the immediate, the short, and the long term. I do not any member of this Committee would fault anything you have said in relation to the need for suitable accommodation, not just accommodation, but suitable accommodation, and aside from any of the financial package or the compensation package. The two, although tied together, are distinct and separate.

The other point that I would just like to make before opening up with any questions from my colleagues is, the issue of the perception by the public of members of the House you have addressed very well. I judge from what you said, from your point of view, and it is a different switch, I guess, from what we have heard and from how we have talked about it ourselves. What you have said to us really is that the perception by the public of members of the House certainly needs attention and needs to be changed because it is erronous and it is inaccurate when you look at the real situation.

But you have put your finger on an area wherein we as an institution, as a legislature, and as a government, the government which flows from the Legislature have brought about some of this on ourselves inasmuch as having the kind of compensation package there is, which restricts the free flow and free travel of members, on the one hand, of having an accommodations problem in terms of inadequate office space and inadequate services, and generally speaking, creating a situation wherein members are attempting to do a job and not having at their disposal the tools in which to do it. I was interested in how you put it, as somebody coming from the labour field, I appreciate very, very much the sentiments that you expressed.

How can you then, you said, expect to be perceived much differently than you are, if, in fact, you have created the situation or allowed the situation to be created wherein you have problems of your own which restricts you from functioning more effectively or as effectively as the public would expect you to function?

And I think that puts it in a little different context than the rank and file citizen would view it. Sometimes, in fact, as we would view it. This morning a number of people who raised the matter of perception by the public of the members of the House raised it from another point of view. They raised the question of education. The public needs to be more informed about the job and role of a member of the House and therein lies one of the chief problems. But you have added to that the other dimension of the systems which we have to function with and you have cited that as one of the reasons that the present perception by our citizens is as it is. I find that very, very interesting.

We are now open for any questions.

MR. FUDGE:
Mr. Chairman, I would just like to say to you that from where you sit now I sit with the unemployed in this area. When they come into a meeting with me and we discuss the unemployed situation and they come tonight and there has been a newscast on where the Opposition is talking about the rain coming down and poor office space and all the rest and they say, 'Well, what in the heck is going on? What hope is there for me if they have to fight over their office space and whether the rain is coming down through the roof?'. That is the kind of innuendo that is set out there and every time you turn around there is something there coming up about the office space and adequacy for the members.

So all I am saying is that some thing should be done and has got to be done to offset some of those problems so that members can function for the people that they represent.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much, Sir. Okay, gentlemen, any question?

MR. FENWICK:
I just have a general one. The problem, of course, in the House of Assembly is you have certain salary packages and benefits and these will either be attractive or not attractive to people considering political life. In your operation, in the Kruger mill now, can you give us some examples of the kinds of salaries that are being made by the tradesmen and the production people in the mill to give us an idea of the kinds of problems that would be involved for other particular occupations if they were considering this kind of life.

MR. FUDGE:
Well, I guess about the lowest paid down there now would be $28,000 a year.

MR. FENWICK:
What would that be? What are we looking at?

MR. FUDGE:
That would be the labourers.

MR. FENWICK:
So we are not even competitive with the labourers, is that what you are saying?

MR. FUDGE:
No.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. FENWICK:
What about the other trades?

MR. FUDGE:
Well, that depends on how far up the ladder you are in the trade that you are in.

MR. FENWICK:
Because that is obviously one of the perceptions, one of the problems. If this Committee comes forward and says, 'This should be the salary', we have to, I think, justify that on the basis of making it a competitive salary with other things. The only reason I am here as the MHA for Menihek is because we could not recruit a labourer from Wabush Mines to run for the job when we were looking at a by-election. He had to turn it down because he said he could not take that kind of a cut in pay to run for office.

I think Wayne Trask said that you had to be - no it was not him, it was the fellow before - either independently wealthy or on welfare in order to run for office - or crazy like us because I do not think any of us here are either independently wealthy or were on welfare before.

MR. SIMMONS:
That was my quote, by the way. I admitted to craziness. Dexter, again I am sorry I missed your opening remarks. You used the opportunity to demonstrate that even with an opportunity to be in the public eye and sit on a committee when a member gets a little crisis or a big crisis in his district that tends to dictate what he does. I have got a situation today where a school is being picketed because of a bus situation. That is where I have been for the last hour.

First of all, I am glad you have come and I was encouraged by what you are saying. Thanks very much for what you have said. The question that comes up is not a question for me, but some people still raise the question as to whether the elected politician's position in Newfoundland ought to be a full-time position. Some would argue that the reason the salary is what it is is because it was never intended to be a full-time position anyway. Do you have any views on that particular subject?

MR. FUDGE:
I am not qualified to say whether it should be or not. I have never given any thought to that scenario. So I would not want to get into that field at all, whether it should or should not.

MR. SIMMONS:
I can tell you, from my perspective, whether it should be or not, it is. I guess, another way of putting the question to you is this, go back to your mill situation, the Bowater period when you were meeting, as you said, with MHAs and so on and so forth. Would the public stand for it if one day their politician says, "I

am sorry, Dexter, I know you have a problem at the mill, but these three days I am working here. Monday and Tuesday I am a MHA, and Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, I am doing job B." I mean is that a palatable approach?

MR. FUDGE:
I hope not.

MR. SIMMONS:
Well, that is what I am saying, you cannot have your cake and eat it too. If they require that the politician be available at reasonable times, that is to say, five days a week or whatever, and usually six days a week and Saturday night thrown in, then the remuneration ought to be commensurate with those requirements, I would think. Do you subscribe to that view?

MR. FUDGE:
I think so. Yes, from my point of view. That is why I am here today.

MR. SIMMONS:
Anybody else?

MR. WOODFORD:
Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Woodford.

MR. WOODFORD:
I was saying to Dexter that I think he should be commended for taking the stand that he has taken, especially, a union leader and like he said, he has been working with the unemployed over the last number of years. I think you should be commended for taking that type of stand. By taking that stand you have shown, I think, to the people here and the people in the Province that there is a serious matter there and it has to be dealt with. Like you say, in order to get capable people and people who are going to stay there, not only just for one term, to see if everything is going to be all right, but to try and do something for this Province and for the people in it, you have to have capable people and people who are paid well to do the job. I want to thank you personally.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Fenwick.

MR. FENWICK:
For the last number of years I have known you as the President of the District Labour Council and as President of your Local and so on. Our Clerk there would like to get your current title down more efficiently or is it just in a private capacity that you are here?

MR. FUDGE:
I am President of the District Trades and Labour Council.

MR. FENWICK:
I was not sure which hat you were wearing today, so I just wanted to check it out.

MR. SIMMONS:
He wears it well.

Any other member want to put a question to Mr. Fudge? If not, I would like to thank you Dexter for taking the time and the interest to come. Thank you very much, Sir.

MR. FUDGE:
I want to say to you working in industry you get a little bit of a hearing loss. When you have a door open and people are out in the back sometime you miss a question that you were asking me, and I missed one of yours. You rephased it and went around the other way, that was the one on the full-time politician.

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes.

MR. FUDGE:
I think it would be better if the door was closed from now on for the next person.

MR. SIMMONS:
Good advice.

Thank you, Sir, very much.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Thank you, Dexter.

MR. SIMMONS:
All right then we would like to invite our next witness for appearing, Mr. Winston Newbury to take the hot seat. Actually the seat has been anything but hot today. We have had a rather good day thus far.

I welcome you Mr. Newbury on behalf of the Committee. We are glad you have taken the time to come. You can take it from here. If you are as inclined after you are finished what you have to say, then we can probably put some questions to you, if that is your inclination. Go ahead.

MR. NEWBURY:
Mr. Chairman, I thank you and your Committee for this opportunity to appear before you to make a presentation. I am acting as a private citizen who is interested in the political process as it unfolds in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I must admit I have not heard much publicity about your Committee and its mandate. However I was on vacation during most of August and that may account for my limited understanding of what your Committee is trying to accomplish. I understand however you are seeking input into MHA accommodations and benefits.

I do not wish to speak directly to these two issues at the outset. However towards the end of my few remarks I would like to comment, at least briefly, on accommodations and benefits for MHAs.

Mr. Chairman, I would first like to address an issue which I believe is more basic but may be considered somewhat peripheral. I believe my comments bear directly on what I understand is the mandate of your Committee. With your permission I will cite a couple of examples which appear to show that citizens are denied opportunities to even become MHAs; consequently, MHA accommodations and benefits are very much outside of their everyday concerns.

As I said earlier it appears that many of our citizens are denied the opportunity to seek public office. This situation is aggravated when these citizens are employed by the provincial government or institutions funded from the Public Treasury. These employees, I might add, are among our best educated and experienced in the Province. Having road blocks and obstacles removed so more people will be free to run for public office is, I believe, just as important an issue as having better benefits and accommodations for fewer individuals who are free to seek and hold public office.

Since these are public hearings I will not mention the names of individuals referred to my comments this afternoon. I believe the names to be irrelevant to the broader issue as to whether or not an individual is free to seek public office. However, Mr. Chairman, if you feel your Committee would like to follow up to get more specific details I will certainly consider disclosing the names of the individuals to you privately.

My first example is the case of a provincial government employee who was told by his superior that he must resign before announcing his intention to seek the nomination in a district. The employee did not resign. After the employee publicly announced he was seeking the nomination his superior again demanded his resignation. That, in my opinion, is undue pressure to keep an individual from seeking public office and maybe becoming and MHA.

My second example also involves an employee who as being paid from the public treasury. This individual was not a civil servant. The person to whom I refer resigned after his resignation was demanded a number of times simply because he was running for public office. It is my understanding this individual suffered financially for a considerable period of time after this incident occurred and before he got established in another job.

In my opinion it is wrong when an employee has to resign from one job before seeking another. Should a cashier, for example, at a Corner Brook drug store have to resign before making application to work at a hotel in St. John's? I think not.

I believe that employers should not be permitted to put undue pressure on employees so they will not seek public office.

Such actions as I have cited on the part of employers may be a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Furthermore, these actions may have implications relative to infringement on the rights of people to make career choices and to decide what they wish to do in their leisure time. No doubt your Committee has access to legal advice on the application of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. May I suggest you consider the actions of employers and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in your final report.

In closing I make the following recommendations: Number one, that legislation be passed permitting employees to seek public office without first having to resign their positions in the public and private sectors.

If all our citizens do not have relatively equal opportunities to become MHAs, then our MHAs will necessarily have to come mainly from among the unemployed and the self-employed. Our Province may not always get the best MHAs under such a system. If we do not elect the highest quality MHAs, then benefits and accommodations become academic issues, as far as I am concerned.

Number two, relative to benefits such as salaries and pensions, our Province should make these sufficiently attractive to entice very capable people to seek public office. I realize this is not very specific but I am sure your Committee, Mr. Chairman, is capable of and can get access to salary ranges and pension plans in both the private and public sectors to use as a basis to recommend a benefits package for MHAs in the future.

Thirdly - finally - relative to

accommodations, all MHAs, whether they are in government or in Opposition, should have first class accommodations in order to do the work they are elected to do. The capable people which I am suggesting we must always try to attract into public office will be better able to perform their duties if they are working with the proper facilities and equipment in adequate accommodations.

I hope these few brief comments will help you as you examine the implications of accommodations and benefits for MHAs.

I wish you all well as you pursue your endeavors.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
I have a brief comment and a couple of questions. You have introduced another issue which is certainly let me say, in my view, at least, and I hope my colleagues will agree, although not directly involved in the mandate as we see it in the terms of reference, nevertheless, I think, as you yourself said, and I would for one agree with you, that it goes without question very much a part of the very general application of the terms of reference or the motion which was passed. We have interpreted the motion in a way which makes the terms of reference rather all embracing to the Legislature, and that issue that you raises is certainly very much germane to that.

A couple of questions come to mind. I am aware of some of the things that you have referred to. I am not crystal clear on a couple of sayings. Teachers are able to contest elections, I believe, without resignation. Okay? Correct me if I am wrong, I recall an incident back, oh, it must be seven or eight years now, regarding a teacher in the technical college in St. John's, and I am not sure, but I thought that the same provision applied to those people, but I am not sure, and I would like your comment on that?

I take it, therefore, that the group that you are chiefly concerned about are people who are full-fledged civil servants or those working for Crown corporations, although not civil servants, but paid by the Treasury, who, as you say, are eliminated or prevented from running for office without paying the price of their job through resignation. This is a very interesting observation and a very interesting issue. I would just like you to enlighten me on the trades college or technical college situation. I would like to have your opinion on that.

MR. NEWBURY:
Well, like you, I am probably not sure of all of the details. But, I cited two cases without mentioning the names, but I would certainly consider disclosing the names to you so you could pursue it. These are not fictitious situations, you know, they are actual situations that happened, one being a civil servant and another one not a full-fledged civil servant I guess, but certainly paid completely from the public treasury.

You mentioned the teachers situation. I guess you meant in the academic system and I believe you referred to the teachers in the other system. You do not appear to be quite sure and to be honest with you I am not quite sure. So maybe it is an area that you, as a Committee, can look into and indeed be sure of. But even if these two groups of teachers are, there is a whole group of civil servants and people paid from the public treasury who are not teachers. Mr. Fenwick would probably know better than I would - he had some time as a member of NAPE I think - that there are probably 14,000, 15,000, 16,000 NAPE members. Many of them are not teachers.

MR. FENWICK:
The area is confused. I think the new teachers' agreement being negotiated now has a clause in it which allows for leave as a right of the collective agreement. In the past it has been at the generosity of the school boards. Some have been more generous than others. In general, however, unpaid leave has usually been given from school boards for teachers to run. The vocational instructors, of which there are 600 in the Province, range from the community college that I come from which has been very generous in giving leave to the Placentia District Vocational School which in the 1985 election just past, an instructor there was told that he would have to resign in order to run. So, there is really not a lot of consistency there.

For the larger area, the line civil servants, the 10,000 people who work for the government, not under Crown Corporations and so on, they are essentially political eunuchs. They have no rights whatsoever.

There is an Order in Council, Tom, I think, dated about 1975, which states specifically if you are to run provincially you must tender your resignation before you announce it and then there is no guarantee whatsoever afterwards you will come back.

So the situation that you have elaborated is quite clear. I think the area that touches our Committee is in what rights you have when you cease to become a member. The problem you have raised is a very real one and one I would like to see attacked. I think we can only back into it by saying that if you had been a civil servant and you were an MHA and you are defeated, then can you go back into a government position? That is something I think we want to look at.

The other end that you are talking about is what rights does a line civil servant have politically to contest elections and so on. We may try to take that as our responsibility but we may be told later on by the Legislature that it really was not an area that we were competent to deal with.

I think it is a decent one to bring up and I think we should have a look at it. If there are recommendations we can make the worse they can do is turn them down. But you are quite right. You are pointing out an excellent problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Before Mr. Lush raises some questions to you, Sir, I can confirm that I am aware - Mr. Fenwick referred to a Minute in Council - I think I dragged that out a few years back because I had a situation within the department that I was minister of. In regard to teachers, that would come under the NTA, but they do have, or at least notwithstanding how the school boards would feel about it, but government per se assumes and takes the position that any

teacher who is a bona fide member of the NTA has the right to run for office and not have their job jeopardized. I can speak unequivocally about that.

The grey area, which maybe Mr. Lush can enlarge upon or explain, is the technical and trade colleges. The other one that I can be definitive on for you and agree with you on is the General Service. You are right, there is a requirement for resignation. I was not aware that it was required in terms of running for or seeking the nomination. In at least one instance or two that was not enforced within the department that I was minister of, but, after the person got the nomination there was no way around the rule, and the person was told that he would have to comply and the person resigned the position. He failed to get elected and was placed back in the position afterwards. We could not very well go out on a limb and say, "We guarantee you the job per se". So, I mean, it did not help him much for the three weeks during the campaign. As it turned out, given the fact that our campaigns are of three weeks duration, the person did not lose any seniority rights because he was back in his job within the thirty day limit. If the campaign had gone on for five weeks then, of course, he would have lost his seniority rights.

MR. NEWBURY:
I think the point that I am making is that it does not seem to be clear cut. I would not like to confine this only to teachers because there is a whole group of people who are paid from the public purse who are not teachers. So it would not like to narrow it just to that. But there certainly seems to be some confusion, Mr. Chairman, even among you people who have talked as to whether it is the generosity of the school board superintendent or if it had been a five week campaign instead of three, and this kind of thing.

What I am suggesting in my first recommendation is that legislation be passed permitting employees to seek public office without first having to resign their positions in the public and private sector, and then it is clear for everybody. There is no ifs, ands, or buts or grey areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
My interpretation of what you are saying is that it should not be at the good graces of a government or a school board or anyone else, but that it be a right established under statute.

MR. NEWBURY:
That basically is what my first recommendation is saying. You see we are trying to attract, or I believe we should be trying to attract, the most capable people.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Yes.

MR. NEWBURY:
And I am all for it. If we can attract the most capable people, I honestly believe and I have said here that they should get a respectable compensation package and then they should work from very reasonable accommodations. I am all for these. But, if we do not get our best then, you know, $200,000 a year and the best office space in the world just may not be good enough. We do not get our best people up there. That is my point.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I appreciate fully what you are saying. What you are saying is that it should be opened up so that everybody has the freedom and the right to seek public office -

MR. NEWBURY:
I think so.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
- and then address the issue of compensation. I read clearly what you are saying.

MR. NEWBURY:
Okay. Fair enough.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Lush.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman, I was just going to make a few comments on the situation with respect to people running for office who are teachers. I think you made reference to the fact that it is generally accepted as a right.

I have come into politics on two different occasions, and both times I was employed by a school board. First, let me say, I think that we have hit that point, that it depends on the whim and the fancy of the school board and this is what Mr. Newbury was getting at that. We want to eliminate that. This is where it stands really with teachers. It depends on the whim and the fancy of the particular school board. We have several teachers in the House of Assembly, all of them have different stories of how they got there. None of them got there with any job guarantees. They just left, they got the time off for nomination and I think it was understood that if they lost the nomination, then there jobs were there for them.

But they can put many road blocks in your way. I do believe that if this were not presently, if this were not in the package that the NTA is now negotiating, that the teachers be given the right to run for politics, I do not believe that I would have been given the right to run in this particular election. I was supposedly teaching with one of the most enlightened school boards in the Province, the St. John's School Board. They put a lot of road blocks in my way.

As a matter of fact, I was told that if I ran this time and got elected that I could not be expected to get a job with the Avalon Consolidated School Board ever again with my track record of going into politics. I thought I was going into the underground world or something, I thought I was making a contribution to my Province. That is what I was told and I had just been evaluated, given the highest evaluation that a person could be given, but because I decided that I was going to go back into politics, I was cut off at the pass. That is the way I left education.

I have talked to many teachers that are now in the House and none of them ever came with any kind of a promise of a job. They are there, and if they have to go back, none of them know what they are going to have to go back to. They will have to take their chances.

Just as a further case when I ran in 1975 I was asked by the NTA to be a guinea pig, to be the first educator allowed to be an educator and to carry on in politics. As you know that is pretty much (inaudible) in all other jurisdictions in Canada.

Because it was the first time it ever happened my superintendent forgot to tidy up all the details. He just gave me the approval to run for nomination and I do not think he thought I was going to win. When I won he did not know what to do with me. He called me in that day and said, "Tom, you have to resign right away. There is a school board meeting tomorrow night. I have to have your resignation". I tried to call the President of the NTA to get his help because I was not sure which way I was going to go but never did I expect that I was going to be called for my resignation the day that I was elected. I thought I would at least be allowed to work out my three month notice and believe you me it was a real fight. I passed in my resignation. The board meeting went on. I went back into the office the next day to ask the superintendent what happened to my resignation. He said, "The board did not even ask for it". I said, "So what are you doing to me?".

So anyways these are the kinds of situations under which I entered politics.

MR. SIMMONS:
Tom, before you finish, just to round out what you are saying. It would be worth telling the Committee and the public what happened in relation this time after you were elected, not only did you have to terminate your position but you had to do it day. You could not serve out your notice.

MR. LUSH:
That is right. Talking about the road blocks - and a person does not have much time. First of all they told me it was April, it was a bad time to leave the school. I realized that but, you know, if it is a bad time to leave the school, the government should not be allowed to call elections in April either. I had all of the sudden become indispensable.

So the superintendent gives me all kinds of conditions. One, I can run for the nomination and the nomination is on a Saturday night, this is Wednesday, all without pay after every second word, of course. You are given time off without pay to run for the nomination. If you lose the nomination you are expected back in the school Monday morning at 8:30. If you win the election, you will be allowed another further, whatever the time is, to contest the election, without pay. If you win the election well then you will not be permitted to come back anymore. If you lose the election you will report back to school the next morning after the election.

I asked that I be allowed to go back to finish out the term because it was late in the year and I realized that. I would be willing to go back and serve the term because I was the best person to do it, only May and June left. As you know we had a conflict of interest. I said I would be willing to go back for free, to take no salary. Either I would give up my MHA salary, or I would take the teacher's salary and not take my MHA's salary. No dice!

MR. CHAIRMAN:
It is very obvious that even under the arrangement with the teachers who make up the NTA there is a

need for clarification and there is a need for enshrining the right, I suppose, to the benefit of being able to run without forfeiting one's job. I must say I have no difficulty at all in terms of supporting this kind of situation. There were a lot of things in place twenty, thirty, forty years ago. We are living in different times now. A lot of things have been changed and a lot of other things must be changed. That is where I am coming from and this is just my own personal opinion.

Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Winston for commenting and I can identify very well with his views and can support his recommendations. I want to talk in terms of the first one, and follow up on what Mr. Lush was saying. Winston's recommendation would solve the problem, the problem that Tom ran into, the problem that many other people have run into, including those in the two examples that he has quoted. Tom is right, you see, at the moment, notwithstanding the general understanding in government about teachers being able or permitted to run, it is very much at the whim of the school board and/or the school district administration. Tom illustrated that in that particular case, it was a case of - without putting words in your mouth Tom - a superintendent who was covering his butt. The board never asked for the resignation in that particular case.

The thing that I found most insulting about Tom's experience is that if he had taken any other job, the superintendent would have almost been harassing him to service notice. Tom, because he was elected, I mean this is the operative condition, because he was elected and now a politician, he was some kind of an untouchable, he could not go back into the classroom the next morning and service out his notice. That is despicable. That is why you need legislation because as long as you have people in administrative positions capable of despicable behaviour like that you have to legislate, to ensure their actions are not inflicted upon other people.

Half in joking, but also to make a point, Tom. There is one more school board in the Province which is more enlightened. I worked for a number of years with the Green Bay School Board and my last position was as superintendent. One day a person came to me telling me that he had won his party's nomination and would I arrange for the board to give him leave of absence. I am going back now thirteen years. I was able to give him leave of absence on the spot without asking the board or without asking anybody. It was not particularly to my credit because I was also covering my butt. The guy who was doing the asking was Brian Peckford, and he was Tory and I was a known Liberal. So it was easy for me to explain to my board after. All the Tories on the board would know I had done the fair thing, and all the Liberals on the board would know I did the magnanimous thing. So it was easy to say, "yes, Brian, you got leave" and so on.

Mr. Lush says there is none of them who had a guarantee, one of them did, Brian Peckford did. He had it in writing. If he lost the election, he could return without penalty. He also had a letter about if he ran a second time and won a second time, then he would at that point submit his resignation. If he did not run a second time or ran and lost the second time, he could return to a comfortable position.

Later I ran, I was the encumbent superintendent in Green Bay when I ran in the old district of Hermitage. I ran, I got leave to seek the nomination and to contest the election. I was elected. I submitted my resignation and served my three months notice. Now that board, you know, was enlightened enough to recognize that superintendents and teachers and other personnel in its employ ought to have access to elected office, if that was the route they wanted to go. That is not a general attitude throughout the Province either with school boards or other employers. For that reason Winston's suggestion about legislation is not only admirable, it is absolutely necessary.

We can split hairs and I suppose, technically, it is not within the mandate, Mr. Chairman, but it is within the spirit of mandate. I submit that what he is talking about is within the spirit of the mandate.

He is right, the other issue is academic if we cannot address this issue which is keeping a large segment of people de facto out of elective politics. It is almost a chicken and an egg. You are not going to have optimally effective politics in this Province unless you have the optimal people coming into it and you are not going to have that until you have fuller access by people. So that is more by the way of a comment than a question but it is an issue, Mr. Chairman, that I would hope we could address in the report.

Winston, you did say that you had to be prepared to give to the Committee privately some of the details. I would suggest you consider doing that, maybe, on a one to one basis because I believe I recognize both examples. They are both examples that are easily documented and would help reinforce the point. Are you saying to the Committee that these two examples represent part of a pattern out there or would you say they are two isolated instances?

MR. NEWBURY:
I am really not sure but I believe if we had clearly stated legislation these two individuals would have been able to point to it and say, "None of this. I have the right as a Newfoundland citizen".

MR. CHAIRMAN:
What you are saying is if there was legislation that could not have happened.

MR. NEWBURY:
That is right.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Those people could have hung their hat on the legislation. That is what you are saying, is it?

MR. NEWBURY:
Yes. I do not think we should leave it up to the district superintendent in Springdale or somewhere else.

MR. SIMMONS:
That is right, exactly. Of course.

MR. NEWBURY:
So I do not know if it is a general pattern or not. Maybe you and your Committee, Mr. Chairman,

can determine if it is a general pattern. What I am saying is if we had legislation these two instances could not have happened. That is my point.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I agree with Mr. Simmons that you could certainly feel free and we would be grateful if you would give us privately the information and the names and we would naturally give you an assurance that they would not be part of our report. It would not be made public or anything like that but it certainly would strengthen our hand to look into this area and deal with it.

Can I ask you one question before we finish?

MR. SIMMONS:
I have one other when you are ready.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Okay. I recall a discussion on this matter quite a number of years ago. One concern expressed - and I do not say it is my concern, I simply relate it from the point of view of getting your opinion - is are there any public servants that you would exclude? In other words, are there any positions in the public service that you would identify such as the Auditor General maybe, the Comptroller of finance, or the Deputy Ministers? Let me just say to you the reason I raise this is that before the present Premier, back quite a number of years ago, I recall a discussion on this, not in Cabinet or anything like that but in part of a political party resolution, or whatever.

One of the problems cited was that in opening up the public service one of the arguments used was that if the Premier of the day called an election, his senior management could effectively be wiped out over night. In other words, what if 80 per cent of the deputy ministers decided all of a sudden that they were inspired or had some inspiration and were going to become part of the new government or the new legislature? I know I am exaggerating the potential but it is all germaine. Have you any feelings on that as we attempt to peruse the matter that you raised a few minutes ago?

MR. NEWBURY:
Yes, I have thought about it briefly. I cannot name specifically which categories should not be permitted to seek nomination let us say but I believe they would have to be very few and very close to the top, but certainly not to exclude many tens of thousands, as appears to be the case now. There could very well be a few people at the top excluded. At the same time, jokingly, I suppose if 80 per cent of the deputy ministers were wiped out through the political process -

MR. SIMMONS:
Life would go on.

MR. NEWBURY:
- life would go on I would suspect. But I realize there would be some difficulty for the Premier.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Okay, and I was not so much dealing with deputy ministers but that argument was used. I was more specifically interested in, for example, the Auditor General and the Comptroller of Finance wherein you do not pick them up every day, they are not available every day. I guess all I am saying is that such a piece of

legislation might have inherent in it the proviso that when a person accepts the position of Auditor General he/she forgoes the right to run for public office for a specific period of time, whatever the case may be. I agree with you that if you include groups which would be totalling to the thousands, I mean, it would be just as well not to have the legislation.

MR. NEWBURY:
You have mentioned teachers a number of times. Take your average teacher, he has a specialty in French and he is teaching French in Stephenville. I do not see where he has any access to very much private information in the higher echelons of government. I see no reason in the world why he should not have this guarantee to be able to run, rather than to be the whim of the Superintendent for Springdale.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
That is right, I totally agree with you.

MR. NEWBURY:
And the same is true of your welfare officers or highways employees and many, many hundreds of more. But again I believe you might be onto something there, maybe there are a few people at the top.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I guess my point is there might be a few and what you are saying is that your position is not so strong that it is saying everybody. If there are a few fine, let us look at that few, but let us make sure there are not 500 or 600 or 2,000 or something like that.

MR. NEWBURY:
There appears to be many, many thousands now and I cannot believe that that should be the way it is.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I have to say, to finish the thing that there are people I am sure who would be delighted to include deputy ministers and assistant deputies because there are some that they would love to get rid of, at least rank and file civil servants would agree with it.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
Since we are into this discussion, just to bootleg an idea, I am aware that in other jurisdictions and certainly in the federal jurisdiction they make a distinction between policy people as opposed to administrative people and the policy of people are those that are excluded. You could make that case here but I have just never seen the need to exclude anybody. You see, if you are excluding on the basis of the issue of who is the holder of confidential information, well a government is always in the situation - and Mr. Barry is the latest case in point - where one who sat in Cabinet is now the Leader of the Opposition. You always have the potential around your government table that tomorrow morning one of those guys can remove himself and become your opponent. That always is there. But what is the saving grace, why Mr. Barry is not spilling the beans these days and why a deputy minister would not be spilling the beans is that these people take an oath of secrecy. They are bound on their honour so that does not

become practically a problem.

So I would not be at all psyched out if next election three of the deputy ministers running for the Tories and another two Liberals and another for the NDP. So what! Now what the guy has to weigh himself as the candidate is his chances of winning but we all have to weigh that. Any candidate going for elected office weighs his chances of winning and the implications for him if he wins or if he does not win. If I am the Deputy Minister of Finance and I am thinking about seeking elected office for what is now the Opposition party, I say, 'What are my chances of winning? What are the chances of my party becoming the government and what are the ramifications if I lose and my party loses? Can I continue to do my job as Deputy Minister of Finance the next morning?'. If I can answer all those questions in the affirmative, I think I should have the same right to contest that election as the truck driver or the secretary or the school teacher that you have mentioned.

Now there is one other issue and I give you as an analogy what happens to a judge when he becomes a judge; under law he loses his right to vote. He is not permitted to vote. That is not because we want to be undemocratic. It is part of the process of removing him from the give and take of elective politics, putting him on the pedestal so he can be the more impartial oberver of the scene and therefore make a more impartial decision. In the same way, it might be possible for those reasons not because we are scared of what a guy might do if he runs and loses or divulging confidences, that kind of stuff, but for the reasons of saying that our deputy minister ought not to become partisan animals just as our judges should not be partisan animals. For that reason when a guy becomes deputy minister in the law you could say that he then is in a category who is not eligible to stand for public office. But if you do it, you ought to do it not because he is going to run away with any great secrets, you ought to do it because it is treating the deputy ministers somewhat as a judgeship in the sense that you are saying, 'We want at the top of the administration of the department a man who is not toying with the idea of being partisan because toying with the idea is the first step to becoming partisan'.

MR. GREENING:
Mr. Chairman, I would not understand a deputy minister running anyway if he is making over $60,000, running for MHA with $23,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
There is no danger of it happening that is for sure.

MR. GREENING:
So it is not going to happen anyway.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
What we are talking about is enriching the situation where in fact, as this gentleman says, that the best and the quality is attractive to the Assembly in future years. If you are going to do that, then it might well open it up to people such as deputy ministers. I think Mr. Simmons point is appropriate in the sense that it is done in the case of judges and if the administration has the fear of its higher echelon being wiped out, then that would

look after that and it would wipe out that reason for not doing what the gentleman was talking about, namely putting legislation in, affording people rights which are very basic rights.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, I see your other witness has arrived. Just let me put one quick question to Winston which he did not cover directly but we would love to have him on record on it. Would he be prepared to give the Committee his views on the adequacy of the present remuneration of MHAs and/or the present facilities, office accommodations, services and so on.

MR. NEWBURY:
I mentioned it briefly. I am not exactly sure what an elected member gets now.

MR. SIMMONS:
Twenty-three thousand plus eleven district allowance basically.

MR. NEWBURY:
And eleven is tax free so it is as good as fifteen, $40,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thirty-four to forty thousand, depending on where you are representing.

MR. SIMMONS:
And depending on what you do with that $11,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes if you are representing Labrador it is about $39,000.

MR. SIMMONS:
Thirty-seven.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thirty-seven thousand. If you are representing St. John's it is $33,000.

MR. NEWBURY:
I will go on record saying that that is not a lot of money if we are hoping to attract the most capable people possible, whether they be in the public service or in the private sector. It is difficult to justify leaving $100,000 to go back to $37,000 or $40,000. I certainly would not be opposed to people, if they are considered to be the best we can find in the Province, getting more than that. It has been discussed on many occasions by many people that we have just 500,000 soles in the Province and fifty-two people to represent them.

Sometimes I question the number of MHAs that we have. What do we have? Ten or twelve in St. John's? You can walk around all St. John's in a day. So I do not know if that is necessary or if it is necessary to have two or three around this area.

Maybe we could attract a better quality person double the salary if we do not have as many of them and it may not cost the public that much more, if any more. Well I do not know if we should cut them in half in order to double the salaries but I believe we might be able to chisel something off the fifty-two and, in return, give them more money and possibly attract some of the people who were referred to a minute ago who might not leave $60,000 to take somewhat less. I do not know if that answers your question.

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes it does. On a light note, the British had the right answer in the last century, a guy could not be elected to more than one constituency.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I just want to say - and there are no more questions - as we wind up, before I thank you Mr. Newbury, I just wanted to restate what I have said a couple of times, if there is something wrong with the number of fifty-two, then I agree we should look at it and I agree that it should be looked at. Nothing is etched in stone. I am all for that. The only thing, I do not believe we should tie in the number with the compensation package, whatever that package might be. In other words, if we are to reduce the number of fifty-two, it should be because there is no need of having fifty-two. If we can show clearly that fifty-two is reasonable given 500,000 population, then, whatever the compensation is, it should be provided with no regard for the fifty-two.

I know you have to have regard for cost but I guess what I am saying and the point I want to underscore is that it seems to me that you do not equate the number in terms of the compensation package. If you are going to reduce it you just say, 'Well, there is no need of that so that is fat, let us get rid of it, let us trim it'. In other words, that is waste.

MR. NEWBURY:
But, Mr. Hickey, I believe this province is in a period of restraint. I could certainly go along with your argument if we had unlimited funds. But I believe in pretty well all other areas whether they be in education, a hospital area or health area or what have you, I believe we have been asked, and maybe rightly so, to do a little more now because we cannot afford to hire as many as we would like to. So maybe the same logic should apply to MHAs. But all other things being equal I could certainly agree with your logic that if we need fifty-two let us have fifty-two and let us triple their salaries.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Sir, I am agreeing with you totally. I am simply saying that maybe there should not be fifty-two. If we are going to determine that fine, and let us do something about it. But, I guess, all I am saying is let us do it for the right reason - if they are not needed. Whatever is determined to be a reasonable compensation package for MHAs, let us find that. In other words, whatever it is, if it is left like it is and if somebody can show a good cause for reducing the number of MHAs, that simply identifies some fat that should be trimmed, that is waste anyway, and it should not have been. That is where I am coming from. I am agreeing with what you are saying in principle.

MR. NEWBURY:
It certainly was not a major issue of mine. I did not even raise the question about the fifty-two.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
It was raised this morning in a number of ways.

MR. NEWBURY:
It was the main thrust of my presentation. If we need fifty-two, then I have no quarrel with it. Then if we need to triple the salary to get the best people to run this Province, I have no quarrel with that. I am not against adequately compensating our elected officials by any stretch of the imagination. I am certainly not.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):

We appreciate that, Sir. I think you have made it very, very clear. We also appreciate your enlightened suggestions on the other matters which are crucial and certainly very, very important.

We thank you very much, Mr. Newbury for taking time out and coming along today and sharing those views with us. On behalf of my colleagues let me assure you that they will not go unnoticed. We will pursue the matters which you are very strong about and, I think, which you have very good reason to be strong about.

If you want to share that information with me or some other member of the Committee on a private basis, for the Committee's work and purposes, I give you assurance on behalf of my colleagues that that is where it stays. It will only be used from the point of view of being able to say, we have verified, we have documented evidence. It is not going to be a matter of everybody knowing about it.

MR. NEWBURY:
Okay. Well, if I can get your address and telephone number, I will certainly consider getting in contact with you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Okay, no problem.

Thank you very, very much.

The Committee is going to rise for five minutes, grab a coffee and then we have one more gentleman who has something to tell us. We will adjourn for five minutes.

Recess

MR. SIMMONS:
Order, please!

We have been running just a little bit behind and we have another session tonight, a meeting tonight, not a hearing. Now we are glad that Mr. Larry Guinchard is taking time to come before the Committee and give us the benefit of his views on the issues before us. Welcome Mr. Guinchard. You know the procedure, we hope to have the opportunity after you have finished your remarks to put a few questions to you if that is permissible.

MR. GUINCHARD:
I am not saying how well I will answer but I will try.

MR. SIMMONS:
Okay, let us go.

MR. GUINCHARD:
Okay Mr. Chairman and Committee members, first of all I would like to welcome you here. I think it is about time that a committee such as we have here today has been put in place in Newfoundland.

It disturbs me very much that people who must take such a major responsibility and takes such a major responsibility in our society in their job are looked upon so passively by the general public. The role of an MHA is such a major role in our society that the people of Newfoundland cannot afford to continue to put it on the back burner. The impact of decisions made by our MHAs, the impact that they have on our lives must be taken very seriously. We simply cannot continue to treat and view our MHAs as we have in the past if we are to progress the way that Newfoundland can and must progress. MHAs are not to be viewed as second class citizens, and contrary to popular belief, the job cannot be done by everyone.

When I decided on how I would approach this, I have decided basically to first ask what is an MHA? Basically very simply, an MHA is a representative of the people. He is representative of all the people, no matter if you are a representative of a riding, there is Liberals, Progressive Conservatives and NDPs living within that riding.

As citizens what do we expect of our MHAs? What type of individual do we want to represent us? I can tell you what I want, I would like to see one individual who is well educated, not only academically but socially as well, an articulate person, and a person of very high calibre. Personally, I feel we should not expect anything else from our MHAs for such a major role.

What are some of our concerns about our MHAs? We want an MHA who is accessible to us when we need him and one who can address our concerns effectively. We also are concerned, or sometimes we take for granted that the necessary tools are at hand to ensure that we are represented the way we expect to be represented. These are some generalities.

Now, let us address some of the specifics of it. Okay the individual, the type of candidate, the calibre that we would like to have, the type of we require is not always attracted by a $23,000 annual salary. If he is then he is either very independently wealthy, or has yet to realize the monetary potentials of his abilities.

Politics, as some would say, is very fickle. You know you are in for one term, the next time you could be gone, or you could be in for two terms and then you are out. Very few people enter politics at a very young age, most decide to enter midway through their careers, so to do so really disrupts a person right dab smack in the middle of his career and it is not always easy to adjust back to your career after you have been out of it for four to eight years. So this is a major consideration or a problem really for the potential MHA and one that is not very easily overcome. Therefore, more things must be done to entice the MHA to offer himself as a representative. The salary of $23,000 offered to a person who is probably making at least $35,000 or $40,000 already, is not very enticing. This, considered with his career interruption, soon would help him reach a decision and that decision more often than not is not to offer himself as a candidate or a representative.

So what must we do? I suggest that we pay him his $35,000 to $40,000 per year salary. Based on what other people receive in our society for the role that they play, I do not feel this is excessive and as an accountant I come across many people who make in excess of $35,000 and $40,000 a year. Also give the MHA enough expense money to cover his expenses. We do not have to be excessive or extravagant but we must ensure that he has enough to represent his constituents the way he wants to represent them or the way they deserve to be represented. He should have enough to cover the salary of a secretary, enough to operate an office in his riding and money to make the necessary travel to his riding that must be done.

We heard earlier this morning about the number of trips. You know, if we raise it to eighteen or twenty-four that may be a reasonable number but that is for the MHAs to decide, for you guys to decide, what you think is required so that you can represent your constituents the way they deserve to be represented. It is your decision to make and I do not think that you should be given, based on twenty-four trips, $300 or whatever you get. You should be reimbursed for your travel expenses. Setting it at twelve, why do you not raise the number of trips you can take and have reimbursement for your travel expenses. It will not be taken advantage of. You are not getting freedom to take trips to Florida or Montreal. You are going back to your riding and I think that is very important. Eleven thousand dollars will not cover these expenses. So really these expenses must be subsidized or the MHA from his salary of $23,000 or he must find a second job.

Newfoundlanders cannot afford and do not deserve to have part-time politicians. Really the responsibility is too great. We want an MHA, a representative, who is accessible to us. The MHA needs a place where we can contact him, we can find him and sit down and give him our concerns.

Riding offices are a must for this Province and offices are available. There are government offices throughout this Province and whether or not you are Liberal, P.C., NDP, no matter. People just deserve to have a place where they feel they can find you. If they have an issue comes up this afternoon one o'clock they should not have to phone all over St. John's or God knows where to try to track you down. They should have a place where they can call to your office and maybe just drive to your office and let them know that they are looking for you and they have something that they want addressed. Now you must do your business with your MHA on the telephone in most places, or if you meet him on the street corner, and really how much business is done on the street corner. An MHA is a very serious job. Excuse the pun.

MR. SIMMONS:
You would be surprised.

MR. GUINCHARD:
I would be surprised. But really it is very sad when you think about it. This is a totally unacceptable way of doing business in my mind. And in St. John's the issue came up this morning about two MHAs sharing an office with a secretary and it was brought up about fifty-two offices and that. Really I do not think I will agree with fifty-two offices, I really do not think it is necessary.

MR. SIMMONS:
Fifty-two members you mean?

MR. GUINCHARD:
Okay, two members in St. John's are present are sharing an office - Correct?

MR. SIMMONS:
I see what you mean, yes.

MR. GUINCHARD:
- with one secretary. You know you do not really need fifty-two offices, all you need really is a meeting room where if a constituent comes in to see

yourself or him, Mr. Lush or whatever, you can take him into the private meeting room. You do not need to have fifty-two meeting rooms. You can still do your work with your colleague but when a constituent comes in he at least deserves the privacy to get his concerns across to you.

We expect our MHA to represent us in the House of Assembly but our MHAs not only represent us they really represent all of Newfoundland. Usually they are asked, in the case of opposition party members to monitor one, two or maybe three different government departments. With a budget of over $2 billion, we have to have somebody really having a look at the money that is being spent from the public purse. The official opposition has the role of watch dog of the public purse. We expect them to scrutinize and examine bills before they pass through the House, to do this really staff must be available to assess them. At present the official opposition party has one executive assistant and one research assistant. I am not sure what Mr. Fenwick has at his disposal.

MR. FENWICK:
One secretary.

MR. GUINCHARD:
So you have a full secretary.

So there are fifteen members presently in our official opposition and most of the effort of the two individual persons I just mentioned, the executive assistant and research assistant, are taken up by duties set out by the leader of the party, therefore leaving the MHA to do his own research and to keep up on his constituency issues. The MHA is faced daily with decisions to write a speech to address the issues that concern Newfoundland as a whole, or to deal with his constituency issues. The constituent will usually win because he is the guy who is going to take you back four years down the road, therefore things that affect the Province as a whole must get the attention that it deserves.

I have even heard the backbencher MHAs of the government do not have the kind of staff at their disposal that they need. Most of the staff is taken up by the Cabinet ministers.

I suggest and recommend therefore gentlemen that a review be made of the staffing required of the MHAs, all MHAs so that the issues of concern get the attention they deserve and a close monitoring and spending from the public purse can be done on behalf of all Newfoundlanders.

I conclude my presentation. Thank you.

MR. SIMMONS:
Thank you very much Larry for that presentation and for coming.

You talked about the meeting rooms, I guess, there is another ingredient that I want to alert you to, and then you would probably give me a comment. For the St. John's member, a constituent drops in in person, I would think, I would assume. For the out-of-town member the member drops in by phone. It is extremely difficult if you are in an office that measures approximately ten by twelve. You are sitting anywhere from four to six feet from your colleague, if he is on a bad connection from

Port de Grave and you are on a bad connection to Rencontre East. You need lots of headache pills handy. It is difficult to carry on two independent conversations in that circumstance.

MR. GUINCHARD:
But there are a lot of delegations, Mr. Simmons, from different ridings who do go in to address their MHAs even when the House is in session.

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes, but what I am saying you can have any combinations, certainly, you can have a number of meetings going on, you can have telephone conversations which ought to be private and it is difficult to conduct a combination of these meetings and phone conversations in the same room, particularly, when the room is that small. That is the point.

MR. GUINCHARD:
The reason I use the meeting room has an alternative because if you take and set up fifty-two offices there is going to be an awful lot of additional expenses. I have no doubt that fifty-two offices may be required, but you are going to have your own office in your riding anyway, you should have your own office in your riding. In St. John's, maybe, we do not require fifty-two offices, because really they are not used all of the time, instead have a few rooms available that if you have a delegation coming in you can meet them.

MR. SIMMONS:
The numbers you are talking about, of course, is not fifty-two because anywhere from fifteen to twenty-two at the moment are in Cabinet.

MR. GUINCHARD:
Okay.

MR. SIMMONS:
Others have related responsibilities, the Speaker, Mr. Greening would have an office in his capacity as Deputy Speaker, for example. So you would have anywhere from twenty to thirty people who are elected. You have anywhere from twenty-two to thirty people who have offices because of other responsibilities. So you are only talking twenty-two or so, and then you have the Leader of the Opposition who has an office, you are talking twenty or so members who are in the category we are talking about, okay.

Just to finish the thought - the jump then, if you are talking twenty backbencher members, the jump would not be from ten, at present, fifty-two, but from ten to twenty that is what is being.

MR. GUINCHARD:
So we are talking ten offices?

MR. SIMMONS:
That is what you are talking about, yes, in effect. In round terms.

MR. FENWICK:
I had a couple of questions. On the travel expenses you mentioned again the question of accountability. In other words, if you are going to increase the number of trips to eighteen or twenty-four, by the way, just to give you a background on it, in the Legislature in New Brunswick the system that they use is that they provide a trip for each week that the House sits, plus another block of twenty-five trips available during the year. In the last year that has accounted for thirty-seven trips in New

Brunswick. Of course the House of Commons is fifty-two trips of which ten can be anywhere in Canada.

But anyway getting back to it, the debate that we have been having in our Committee at this point, is should it be accountable or should it be unaccountable? In other words, should they just give you the money to take twenty trips or thirty or whatever you are going to get or should you have to produce a voucher for twenty or thirty? I think I hear you saying that you think definitely the voucher should be part of the system.

MR. GUINCHARD:
It should be accountable.

MR. FENWICK:
Okay, which is consistent I think with most of our witnesses at this point.

You are the first person now, remarkedly, to raise the whole question of support staff for Opposition backbenchers and so on. It is an area that I do not think that has been touched on by any other witnesses to this this point, and it is one that I feel very much is an area, I think, that we have to talk about. As you point out, the Leader of the Opposition has an executive assistant and a researcher. The government backbenchers have essentially one person, sometimes called a researcher, sometimes an office manager, or whatever. In my case, there is no such thing as research support staff for me at all. I have a secretary, a whole secretary mind you, but that is it. That is the extent of the support staff. I would like to suggest to you, I think that you have hit an areas which I think has various ramifications to it.

If, for example, you have very poor research staff then very often when you come into debate in the House you are poorly prepared, because you have not been able to do the research that is necessary, and as a result, the level of debate might not be what we would normally associate with that kind of thing. So that is one of the things we have got to look at as well. What did you have in mind when you mentioned that about the staff to scrutinize the bills and so on? What kind of support would you think would be helpful?

MR. GUINCHARD:
Most of the problems that you guys are faced with are probably social problems, you know, unemployment insurance problems, social work problems and things like that. Just more people available to give you some more background information. You cannot be expected, as I pointed out, to represent your constituents and also be responsible for maybe shadowing the Department of Labour or the Department of Transportation. If you have a constituency matter and you do not have the research staff and all of the sudden when you are caught off guard with some bills announced and you really do not have the background to stand up and debate that bill, that bill can very easily slip through. That is something that has to be addressed. I think it is a serious matter. You cannot be expected to be on top of everything yourself because you are only as good as the people you have around you. That is my opinion on running an office or whatever. You have to have support staff. Businesses have support staff.

You guys are the managers of our Province, the biggest business that is in our Province. You go to any business down the road and he has got assistants or office clerks doing things for him. He just gets the final paper work and then he make decisions. This is the kind of information that you need and that is what you require to do the job efficiently and effectively. That is what you need, information.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I think that some of the points that you are making have surfaced today from other people and in other ways. We have discussed those issues. At some point in time, and as I said this morning in response to some comments that were made, I am not so sure that this Committee with its time frame or its time constraints can address adequately the issue. I think the issue you are getting at in a specified way when you talk about support assistance, support staff, research staff and so on is all part of the larger issue of where the Legislature is today, versus thirty, forty or fifty years ago. There has not been any drastic changes in the structure of the Legislature to permit the kind of support services, support staff, and provisions for information as you referred to, to enable the member to have a real insight into legislation, into other issues and measures that are either being debated in the House, or being passed into law in the House. If the legislator is to fulfill his or her role in the present scheme of things, and the future scheme of things, based on the issues that we are facing now and going to face in the future, then it seems to me the issue of the role of the legislator in the House of Assembly has to be assessed and evaluated during the current time, commensurate with changing times. That is what I am reading into what you are saying. You are being specific in terms of a couple of areas. You know I agree.

Just one other point, the matter that you mentioned with regard to offices, as you know there are not constituency offices right now. There are some offices in certain parts of the Province, but as a matter of policy there are no offices in constituencies.

Mr. Simmons mentioned a couple of things in relation to the office and one of the things which concerns me insofar as an office for each member who is not a minister, or who does not occupy any position other than a member of the House, I take the position and I would defend it to anyone anywhere, whatever the cost, I do not care what the cost is, even though we are in a period of restraint, to me it is repugnant for any member of the public, any taxpayer, to go to the Confederation Building to see a member of the House, whether it is his or her member or whether it is someone else's, to find that whatever is on their mind they have to sit down and discuss it in the presence of someone else, or that that member has to ask someone else to leave the office so that he can have, or she can have, a discussion with this person who has maybe gone to great trouble to come in to solve his problem or to deal with another issue on behalf of someone else. That is very, very often what happens.

MR. GUINCHARD:
Has this been going on for years?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
It is part of system and as I have come to know in my own situation recently, if you get into a situation where people come into discuss with you very private matters, very personal matters, then there has to be confidentiality and there has to be privacy. Any other questions?

MR. LUSH:
I just wanted to make a comment, Mr. Chairman. I think that this has been a fantastic day really. Just about everybody touched on a different issue, though people touched on common issues, people touched on different issues in the last two speakers, one talking about the right of public employees being given the right to participate in politics and now Mr. Guinchard emphasizing this point about research staff. I can only emphasize that in the nine years that I have been in politics, as an individual member, I have never had any kind of research staff, anybody who could help me to do anything, get your information where you can, you call this one, you call that one, if something is initiated by labour you try to get as much out of them - you have no kind of expertise at all. I think you mentioned most of us are not lawyers and when you get into legislation this is a lawyer's business - the language and the jargon that it is written in. Very often we have to go in almost cold to debate what is to be the very essence of making laws in this Province. That and a myriad of other problems and activities require some expert assistance, but we do not have it.

Just to comment on Mr. Chairman's comments about the office space, it is not as discourteous as it appears, we have established that now, the gentleman I am sharing an office with he comes in in the morning to do work, he opens the door and he does not know what he is going to see, if he sees two or three people, "Oh, I am sorry." So he goes off looking for another place to sit down and make a few phone calls. If he comes in and there is nobody there I will probably say, "I have a delegation coming in at ten o'clock so if you have some work to do you had better through it." He probably has somebody coming in at twelve so it is just a matter of course now, routine. We do not have to be asked to leave, we know we should, and you go out looking for some other office. You are never sure where you are going to sit down for two hours in the day because I might go to Mr. Simmons office, he might not be there but he is probably in some other part of the building doing something, shortly he returns.

I got a private office one time because I talked loud and the person sharing the office with me could not work with me. He asked to get out. Now that was back about four or five years ago. He asked to get back in again. But there are some people who cannot work in those kinds of set ups. They cannot work when there is another person talking on the phone. It just ruins their day when they come in in the morning and I am there. If I am going to be doing a lot of phone work, that person knows that they have to find somewhere else for the day. So that is the kind of system under which we are presently operating.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Just to conclude, I want to thank you very much on behalf of my

colleagues for coming and making a presentation. It is nice to see that people have come by today.

I think Mr. Lush put it appropriately when he said that this has been an extremely profitable day for us because we have had a whole range of issues raised. I for one wondered if in fact some of those issues would have been raised by the people coming to confront the Committee and to pass on their ideas. Issues far removed from the accommodation aspect, one of which you have raised.

I think that it has been an extremely good day from the point of view of the broad issue of the legislature in the 1980s and in the future. I think that is really where we are at.

Thank you very, very much for your contribution. I know that it will help us in our deliberations and in bringing in our final report.

MR. GUINCHARD:
Thank you very much.

MR. LUSH:
When do we reconvene, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
What we should do is have a quick word now on that.

MR. FENWICK:
I thought we had agreed on seven-thirty this evening.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Okay, are we settled on that?

MR. SIMMONS:
At seven-thirty in lieu of tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
This meeting stands adjourned.

Select Committee on Member Services, Accommodations, and Benefits

Public Hearing
St. John's
September 10, 1985

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Order, please! The meeting shall now come to order.

The first person scheduled to appear before the Committee this morning was the hon. Don Jamieson. Obviously, Mr. Jamieson has been delayed travelling here from Swift Current, and I am sure there is a number of reasons why he is not here. However, our colleague, Mr. Warren, who was scheduled for 11:00 o'clock, is here, and to expedite matters and not delay Mr. Warren any more than necessary, I think it is appropriate now for Mr. Warren to take his seat at the table and give us the benefit of his views on the issues that are before us.

Let me say one further thing: In our hearings in Corner Brook we simply stated to the people coming before us that the terms of reference contained in the motion passed in the Legislature to set up the Committee being interpreted by the Committee in the broadest terms and, therefore, almost anything pertaining to the structure and functioning of the Legislature is appropriate for commentary.

Thank you for coming, Mr. Warren.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, I am sure Mr. Warren is aware that after he has finished what he has to say we would like the opportunity to put some questions, if we may. Any objections?

MR. WARREN:
No problem whatsoever, Mr. Chairman.

First let me take the opportunity

of thanking you for giving me the opportunity to appear before your Committee. As an elected member since 1979, I represent one of the most difficult districts in our Newfoundland Legislature. I think my colleague for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) has a similar district, but geographically I believe Torngat district is about the most difficult to visit and to communicate with.

I am sure your Vice-Chairman, Mr. Simmons, has a district that has some similarities to mine, as do other members on the Southwest Coast. But I think we can probably put those two Labrador districts in a total of probably five or six which have a lot of difficulty with transportation and communications.

For the past number of years I have advocated that if government wants politicians to do their work, and the same thing applies to school boards that want their teachers to do their work, then they should be paid for the work that they are doing. I am sure the public perceives us as working just when the House is in session, which is far from the truth. I think when the House closes we do as much work or more than we do when the House is in session.

There are three of four subjects or ideas or suggestions that I would like to throw forward. To begin with, if we ask for a salary increase, which I am sure every working man and woman would like for and receive, we must realize there is a wage freeze on in the public service. I think until that freeze is lifted we should be very, very careful in asking for any salary increase. Once the freeze is lifted on the public service, then it should also be lifted on the politicians.

Looking back on it, I think we have been in the freeze much longer than the public service has but, if the consensus says that we stay in the freeze with the public service, I am willing to abide by that.

I think another very important concern of most of us is having an office in our districts. I believe that there is need in some districts for office space, but I think to be honest and fair I have to say that an office in my district of Torngat Mountains would not be feasible. The fact that the nearest communites in my district are forty-four or forty-five miles apart. I have six communities scattered over a coastline of something like 300 miles. I think an office in one particular community in my district is not feasible, but six offices would be. The only way it could work in my district would be to have an office in each community, and I would not ask for that because I do not think the Treasury can afford it. In such districts as Carbonear, Bellevue and probably Bonavista North, which have good road transportation, I say there is nothing wrong with setting up offices. But in such isolated districts as the four or five I mentioned, instead of each having one office that would cost $5,000 or $6,000 or $8,000, maybe the members for those districts could be given equipment to establish a contact person in each of these isolated communities. That is only a suggestion that I throw open to you.

I believe consideration should be given by the Committee to the district allowances payable to members. I think our district allowances vary from St. John's Center to Eagle River. Maybe consideration should be given to increasing these allowances in proportion to the size of the area represented.

In some legislatures provisions are made so members have the opportunity of having a trip per week to their districts. I do not believe that I should have fifty-two trips a year to Torngat Mountains. I believe if the people in Torngat Mountains saw me fifty-two times a year they would be sick and tired of me. To be honest, if I can get up there twenty times a year I say that is sufficient and I think I would be doing a good job for my constituents.

I will throw this open as a suggestion to the Committee: While the House is in session, which could be anywhere I think on the average over the past number of years of from 150 to 200 days, we should look at a trip per week, but while the House is in session. Once the House is not in session, then if an individual wants to go to his district he can go there and stay there as long as he or she feels is necessary. But once the House is not in session I do not see why we should be looking for trips to our districts. There could be one or two trips during that time but not one per week, because we can spend as much time as we want there while the House is closed. So it could mean that instead of fifty-two trips a year, which some legislatures now have, and instead of the twelve which we presently have, we might settle on 20 to 25 trips a year. I throw that out as a suggestion.

Those are the three or four concerns I have. I honestly believe, as well as a lot of others in the working force, that we are underpaid. I have no doubt about that. I am sure that the general concensus out there in radio and T.V. land is that if they want to get good mileage out of politicians then we should be paid for it. It would also eliminate the need for politicians, such as Garfield Warren and others, having to augment their earnings by some other type of employment. I believe you cannot be half a politician and half a doctor, half a real estate man or half a lawyer. I believe the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador should have full-time politicians, members devoted to the people they represent. If because of our positions, people expect us to donate here and there, donate to this cause and that cause, which we all feel obligated to do and want to do, then let them pay us enough to do a good job. Then if we do not earn our keep I am sure our constituents can take care of us the next time around. I thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much, Mr. Warren. I have one comment and one question before I pass it over to my colleagues. Correct me if my interpretation of what you said is inaccurate, but I have interpreted what you have said with regards to salaries being low to mean that in your view when one enters public life, is elected to the House of Assembly, the first obligation and first priority is and should be to be a politician, to represent the constituency and the people who elected you. If they can supplement their earnings, okay, but that first and foremost

requirement should be public life, being a member of the House. In that context you are saying the salaries are too low. You are, therefore, if my interpretation is right, saying that in your view there is no such thing as a part-time politician except if it is by his or her own initiative.

MR. WARREN:
I am trying to say that they should not be.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
In other words, the compensation package should be such that anyone entering public life should be able to provide for his or her family and not be required by necessity to go into something else.

MR. WARREN:
Not only not be required, but it should not be.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
And should not.

MR. WARREN:
Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
In other words, they should confine their efforts while they are in public life to serving the people who elected them.

MR. WARREN:
Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I see. Thank you.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
I thank Garfield for coming, it is good to see you. I notice that other than making some reference to offices in the constituency, he chose not to address that aspect of the Committee's mandate which deals with accommodations and facilities. Could I ask you to just give the Committee your views on accommodations, facilities, services, as they relate to the seat of government here in St. John's? Have you any views on that issue?

MR. WARREN:
I apologize, Mr. Chairman, for not mentioning the accommodations that we presently have here for members of the House of Assembly in Confederation Building, or wherever we are in town, but I want to be quite candid and say that when you are elected you should have your own office and your own secretary. That is the least that the public of this Province can do for us, provide an office and a secretary. I am sharing a secretary now with another person and I can tell this much, it is very, very inconvenient. You cannot do your work satisfactorily. I have done it the last five or six years. Not only is it frustrating the other member, but it is also very, very frustrating for the secretary. I think if you have a competent secretary she can be half the battle for an individual politician, but she cannot be if she is trying to carry the work load of two politicians who have different goals, different districts to serve, whose concerns are altogether absolutely different. By doing this you do not get good mileage out of your staff, your secretary. I say the main recommendation of this Committee should be an office and a secretary for each individual member.

MR. SIMMONS:
Could I go back to your comments about a constituency office? I use constituency because a district office has another connotation in Newfoundland in governmental terms. I wonder if you would indicate a little more specifically what would serve your situation, which is my situation too, that of a rural district which has a number of communities, where it would not be pragmatic to have an office in one location because they can just as easily phone St. John's as they can phone Nain for example. What kind of an arrangement would be a trade-off for you? For example, Gander or some of the more urban seats could have a district office. What would be the trade-off, what would be the mechanism for you, in your type of seat, to serve your district better?

MR. WARREN:
A telephone in each individual community.

MR. SIMMONS:
A telephone listed in your name, you mean?

MR. WARREN:
A telephone listed in my name in each individual community, and a contact person. I suggest a figure, which could be negotiable, of expenses plus $50 to $100 a month for that contact person.

MR. SIMMONS:
So you are talking, in effect, about some kind of a district administration allowance which a member could then use either to rent office accommodations, in a case like Gander or Grand Falls, or, in your case could, to pay an honorarium to each of a number of contact persons: Is that what you are stating in effect?

MR. WARREN:
You are partly correct. To use the district of Torngat Mountains as an example, there are six communities. You are talking about six telephones, which could each run you about $100 a month for argument's sake, and then it would cost another $100 a month as an honorarium for the individual whom I select to look after my concerns in each town. So you are talking about $200 a month, about $2,500 annually, which I think is sufficient for my district.

MR. SIMMONS:
So you would see some kind of an administration allowance within the district in lieu of an office as another option?

MR. WARREN:
Yes. But it should be the same amount for administration for every individual district.

MR. SIMMONS:
You say it should be?

MR. WARREN:
It should be, yes. Geographically I have the largest one. Population-wise I think Neil Windsor might have the largest one. Now, Mr. Windsor may not have the same kinds of concerns that I have but then again, on the other hand, he may have other concerns than I do not have. So there should be just a standard rate if there is going to be any recommendation for administration.

MR. SIMMONS:
I have one other line of questioning, Mr. Chairman. May I ask where you reside when the House is in session?

MR. WARREN:
In the St. John's area.

MR. SIMMONS:
I want you to apply that to your recommendation about trips. Is it not true then that when the House is in session you almost have no requirement to travel between St. John's and your district simply because it would be almost physically impossible to do a turnaround on Saturday and Sunday to get to Nain and back again. Let me put it this way: In practice would you make a trip a week when the House is in session?

MR. WARREN:
Yes, if I am called upon to do so and if I can afford it.

MR. SIMMONS:
Let me put it differently to you: When the House is not in session where do you reside?

MR. WARREN:
Actually I still reside in St. John's. Then again I go to my district when need be. I have the same opportunity to reside in St. John's as you did.

MR. SIMMONS:
I am not criticizing. My situation is similar to yours. That is not the point I am making. The point I am making is that I heard you say that when the House is not in session one or two trips is enough. I am wondering, if your principal residence is in St. John's, how you could get by? The number of sitting days is close to ninety a year, I think it is. So if it is sitting ninety days that means it is not sitting for the other 175 or so. How would you get by on one or two trips for 175 days? I heard you say a trip a week when the House is in session and one or two additional, so I am wondering if you might want to rethink that in terms of the facts of life.

MR. WARREN:
Roger, I thought it over before I came here. As far as I am concerned I have the same opportunity to go to my district when the House is not in session as Roger Simmons does or as Mr. Hickey does or Mr. Fenwick does. I have the same opportunity as a member to go there. Now I can go to my district, as I did the Summer, and spend a considerable amount of time there travelling throughout the towns and that, doing what I deemed was necessary. I am sure some people in my district would probably want me to come more often, but the opportunity is there when the House is not in session for anyone to go there, maybe not so often. But when the House is in session I say that we would go there per week. I think you will come up with close to twenty trips per year if you look back over the record for the past number of years.

MR. SIMMONS:
Again, my intention is not to argue with you but just to give you feed back to show you what I heard you say. Let me put the question to you this way: Would you be just as happy if you had an aggregate number of trips which you could use either in session or out of session?

MR. WARREN:
I have no problem with that. That is entirely up to the individual politician. I do not think the number of trips should exceed the number of weeks that the House is in session, except for an extra trip or two during the long period the House is closed. But it definitely should not exceed 24 trips a year.

MR. SIMMONS:

Twenty?

MR. WARREN:
Twenty-four a year. I use that as an outside figure. That is my opinion.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Two points, Mr. Warren, before passing it on to some of the other members. Again for clarification so that we know precisely what you are recommending here, as regards to the trips to your constituency, is it fair for me to interpret what you have said to mean one per week while the House is in session? Your justification, so to speak, for a number of trips when the House is not in session is that when you visit when the House is not in session you can stay longer because you do not have a requirement to come back to the legislature per se. If you visit for two days while the Legislature is open, obviously you would lose two days from the House because you are in your district on business. But when the House is not in session I am reading what you are saying to mean that then you can stay longer when you visit - you can stay for a week or for two weeks - which you cannot do when the House is in session, obviously, because you have a requirement to sit in the House as well.

On the other point, when you talk about a telephone system or some administrative system in your constituency, your constituency being unique inasmuch as you have those six areas, I have interpreted what you have said to mean that the important thing for you is that an amount of money be made available to members such as yourself, but with a qualification - and this important thing seems to have come from what you have said - of flexibility on the part of the MHA to use those funds in the way which best fits or suits him or her in dealing with the constituency. In other words, whatever the amount of money would be you would want flexibility. In your case the best thing would be a telephone system and someone to man it and have contact with you. For another MHA, it might be an office, or whatever. But what you are saying is provide certain monies to all members and let them use it and tailor it to the needs and requirements based on the type of constituency.

MR. WARREN:
That is basically what I said.

Mr. Chairman, just to give you an illustration why I use the figure of twenty-four trips, it would cost $14,638 for me to go to my district twenty-four times. It is $614 return from St. John's to Nain, so it would cost the government $14,638.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
For twenty-four trips?

MR. WARREN:
That is right.

So you have to be realistic. That is the present airfare and the only way to get to Nain is to fly. You can fly on different kinds of machines, some with the doors half open sometimes, but you will get there eventually, if you are lucky.

MR. SIMMONS:
To put it in perspective, a quick calculation says to get to my district twenty-four times would be of the order of $6,000. I think, the Committee ought to be aware that what the witness is giving is almost the extreme case

in that he has, as we all know, perhaps the most difficult district in the Province. Mine is not the easiest, but it would be $6,000 compared to $14,000.

MR. WARREN:
So what I am saying is I do not think our government can afford to send me fifty-two times a year to Nain, when you see how much it would cost. I do not think I would want to go to Nain fifty-two times.

Let us look at Wilson Callan in the Bellevue district. Probably twenty-four trips to his district would only cost about $2,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Mr. Warren, let us put it in perspective then. Two things flow from what you have said. We appreciate the points you have made in terms of the cost. If you have flexibility in whatever system is put in place, I think you will agree, at least I am reading it into what you are saying, there has to be uniformity.

MR. WARREN:
That is right.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
In other words, the way to do it seems to be not to have a special number of trips. Your having a very difficult district, the difference there would show up in the budget, given the higher cost of you visiting your constituency, say than Mr. Simmons visiting his. Certainly my visiting mine would be the other end of the line in terms of cost. But, I guess what we are saying is let there be a number of trips approved as a policy. Now the cost will vary. The ability of the person to make or use up the number of trips would come into play. In other words, if twenty-four trips or thirty trips were struck as a policy for members to visit their constituency, it does not follow, of course, that they use all thirty if there is not a need. I think what we have found in listening to our colleagues from time to time is that what there seems to be a need for is a number of trips more than there is now which is twelve. Now whether you use them would depend on you, the MHA, or the need. Surely that would be it. But again I think it is a case of a difference in the budget in terms of the cost, there would be obviously differences there. But you would agree that there would have to be uniformity or a universal policy in terms of numbers.

MR. WARREN:
I agree there should be only a particular number of trips. I will keep using twenty-four because that is what I said at the beginning, but if the number of trips is twenty-four for Garfield Warren, then it is twenty-four for Glen Greening.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Right.

Mr. Lush.

MR. LUSH:
Now just to pursue the item with respect to trips, Mr. Warren sets a figure around twenty-four. I want to suggest to him that would fall woefully short of the number of trips that I would require for Bonavista North, although I can appreciate his own situation. I do not know whether you have studied other legislatures, but I think you will find that they range from a low of thirty right now. Of course, we are not in the ball park at all. This is only

pittance what we talk about, twelve trips. I think there is difficulty, there is a dichotomy when you have a Province so large as Newfoundland and Labrador. You represent Torngat Mountains, and it is a little unfortunate that it is so far away. But I would suggest to you, Sir, that if we have a government, which suggests that we can govern this Province, then we should be able to pay for the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) and the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) to visit those districts as often as is necessary. I do not know how we can set up different categories for you and different categories for me.

You mention when the House is in session a person can go to the constituency and stay. I find you have to come back. I find that I cannot work very effectively by telephone, I have to get back here. I have been to my district all Summer and I find, after I am there a week, I have to come back. I get loaded down with so many problems I have to get back in town for a couple of days. I am just wondering, in that respect do you think that maybe all of the other jurisdictions are out of whack, including the federal government with its fifty-two trips a year? If you look at other jurisdictions right across Canada you will find very few of them with less than an average of about thirty-five. That is what you will find with other jurisdictions right across Canada. Do you think our job is any less important?

MR. WARREN:
I will answer that by saying that a 100 per cent increase in the number of trips is not a bad try.

MR. LUSH:
It is not a matter of a try. You seem to be thinking of it as a try. I look at this as a matter of the government allowing me to be able to do my job effectively. If the government are thinking that twenty-four trips to Bonavista North are enough for me to do my job effectively, I suggest they are entirely wrong.

MR. WARREN:
May I make a comment, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Before you make your comment, let me just say that Mr. Lush is obviously expressing a point of view here, but I want it clearly understood that it is not our role or place here to agree or disagree. I interpreted Mr. Lush's commentary as clearly aimed at drawing your position from you.

MR. WARREN:
Well, that is what I am hoping to do. I think so far I have established my position as clearly as I want to. Like I said, I have used the twenty-four trips. If we are talking about office space in the districts, then Mr. Lush has also to realize that maybe more than twenty-four trips would not be necessary because he would have his district office in place which would also help him do his work. So he has to consider that part of it too.

MR. LUSH:
Just one other question, Mr. Chairman. Would you agree that there can be some differences, though, that there can be some adjustments? Again, I realize that when you are looking at the dollars and cents, at the cost of a trip to Torngat, it looks rather a large figure. From where I sit I think if we are to do a good job

you have to pay the price. But would you, agree, then that there could be different standards for people in different areas, or must it be a blanket standard right across the board?

MR. WARREN:
I agree. As I said earlier, what will be accepted from the Committee's recommendations no one knows yet. But regardless what the recommendation is, the number of trips that Tom Lush is permitted to make to Bonavista North under the Treasury Board guidelines should be the same number of trips that Eugene Hiscock is allowed to make to Eagle River. I do not want to see Tom Lush making thirty-five trips, and Eugene Hiscock making nine trips, or making twenty trips and Tom Lush making thirty trips. I think every individual member should be given the opportunity, if the recommendation is agreed on to make the same number of trips.

MR. LUSH:
Just one other question, Mr. Chairman. You mentioned the freeze. I have been in a freeze position since 1975. I gather from your statement that you were prepared to stay in the freeze a little longer if the government so determined: Is that correct?

MR. WARREN:
To the end of this fiscal year.

MR. LUSH:
When do MHAs come out of the freeze, do you know?

MR. WARREN:
If I knew that, Sir, I would not be here this morning. I do not know any more than you do.

MR. LUSH:
But the government, have they not set up a time when we come out of the freeze?

MR. WARREN:
I do not know. I know no more than you know as a member.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Any further questions?

MR. LUSH:
No, other than to say I thought the understanding people now have, that we are coming out of the freeze, is the announced policy of the government.

MR. WARREN:
As one member speaking, the same as you, do we know if we are going to go back into a freeze or not? I do not know.

MR. LUSH:
You are willing to go back freezing again?

MR. WARREN:
I do not know. That is a government decision to make.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
For the purpose of just providing information, it is my understanding that the last increase, in June of 1983, was 4 per cent. Given a two year freeze, that would mean - and I think this is what Mr. Lush is getting at - that members of the House were out of the freeze effective June past. I think this is the point.

MR. WARREN:
Yes. I think I made myself pretty clear at the beginning, Mr. Chairman, when I said that we should coincide with the public service, that, when they come out of the freeze, then we should come out. I stand by that statement. I do not believe it is fair to

those people who are working in government offices in Newfoundland and Labrador to stay frozen, if we use the term frozen, and see we politicians coming out of that freeze. I do not believe in it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Very good.

Mr. Fenwick.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Chairman, I question I want to ask Mr. Warren arises from the many trips we took together to Labrador, and also from his unique position in the House in that, if I recall the song, he has looked at life from both sides now.

MR. WARREN:
You are concerned?

MR. FENWICK:
It is not meant that way. You have a unique perspective now. As you said, it costs over $600 to get you to Nain. It now costs, I think, $515 return to get me to the center of my district. So when you run out of trips you have run out of trips, because at $500 a crack you cannot afford to fly there, as you could, perhaps, drive to Bellevue or Bonavista North. My question is: Since you have been on the government side, since you have been a parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development (Mr. Aylward), has it been any easier? Let me rephrase that, has it been more financially possible to get into Labrador on a more frequent basis than when you were a Liberal?

MR. WARREN:
By all means. In fact, I must say that I just came back from Labrador last night. I had to go there with the minister, so I had the opportunity of travelling with him minister and coming back. If the minister is going to my district, he has transportation provided and I can get there much easier. But, again, my total trips will not exceed twenty-four regardless what happens.

MR. FENWICK:
So what you are saying now is as a parliamentary assistant with the ability to travel on government business as opposed to House business, I guess, which would not be as liberal, access to your district is probably twice as good as it was before?

MR. WARREN:
I would say it is much, much better. But then, again, I think all Cabinet ministers are in the same boat, so you cannot start differentiating between the Cabinet minister from Grand Falls and the Cabinet minister from Corner Brook, I think it is up to the Committee how to come up with the number of trips a member makes to the district. I know last year I made my twelve trips. This year I have only made three.

MR. FENWICK:
So you even have not had to use them?

MR. WARREN:
I have used so far this year three trips of my own instead of eight or nine. Otherwise, I have not had to claim any trips at all.

MR. FENWICK:
There are sort of two lines of questioning that come out of this, or supplementaries - I guess since we are in the old Colonial Building we can probably use that term. We are not really talking about increasing the number of trips since we are not including

the twenty-two Cabinet ministers or the people attached to them as parliamentary assistants, are we? They are really taken care of now?

MR. WARREN:
In some cases, not all cases. As a parliamentary assistant to a minister, I cannot get to places as often as a minister can - which is only natural. But then, again, I am sure it is much easier for me to get to Torngat if a minister is going. For example, the Resource Policy Committee, hopefully within the next month will be visiting my district. I would hope as the member for that district they will be inviting me to go along with them, so that trip will not cost the House of Assembly anything.

MR. FENWICK:
Are you telling us that as a Liberal you were never invited?

MR. WARREN:
Well, I am sure that is politics. That answers itself.

MR. FENWICK:
I think that is important. We are looking to change conditions for backbenchers - Tory, Liberal and NDP. We are not really worried about Cabinet ministers because they have the flexibility.

The other aspect, and it is one that we have discussed within the Committee, is we have been talking about trips back and forth to a district, but we are really talking about travel and access to other parts of the Province as well. Do you see any desirability for MHAs having the finances to travel to other parts of the Province as part of their function as legislators?

MR. WARREN:
No, not unless you are required by government to do so.

MR. FENWICK:
So you say that if the government can do it, fine, but as legislators we cannot do it?

MR. WARREN:
Well, unless you want to do it of your own accord, sure.

MR. FENWICK:
At your own expense?

MR. WARREN:
Yes.

MR. FENWICK:
That is just the first question.

MR. WARREN:
Peter, maybe I should answer you by saying that you were elected by the people in Menihek, not by the people in Bay St. George, just to give an example.

MR. FENWICK:
But you are elected to represent the Province in the Legislature and to enact legislation that affects the whole Province.

MR. WARREN:
Yes.

MR. FENWICK:
I am just throwing that out because the House of Commons does have a system whereby they allow a limited amount of travel within the country.

Now the other thing is I am not quite sure what you meant when you were talking about the district allowance varying. You said it should be increased in proportion to the area you represent, and I was not clear what you meant by that.

MR. WARREN:

You probably should refresh my memory, too.

MR. FENWICK:
You were talking about the district allowance varying from $10,000 to $14,000 or $15,000, and you said it should be increased in proportion to the area you represent. I was not sure what you meant by that.

MR. WARREN:
Let us compare the districts of Eagle River and St. John's Centre, to take two extremes. Now I just forget what the figure is, but the member for Eagle River and the member for St. John's Centre receive the same district allowance at the present time. I think the member for Eagle River should be getting much more proportionately, because of the district he represents, the difficulty getting there and everything else, than the member for St. John's Centre.

MR. FENWICK:
But do you not think if the travel allowance, the trips as we call them, were increased that would solve part of his problem?

MR. WARREN:
Maybe the member for Eagle River does not want more trips.

MR. FENWICK:
No comment.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
May I interject here? What you are saying, Mr. Warren, is you think that the differential between the categories of district allowances should be changed, that they are too close together.

MR. FENWICK:
There ought to be more of a spread.

MR. WARREN:
Yes, considering the district he represents.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
In other words, there should be a wider spread based on geography.

MR. WARREN:
I think the member for St. John's Centre, on a good, calm day, can get on Flower Hill with a loudspeaker and talk to all his constituents. I think Eugene Hiscock would have a difficult time doing that.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you.

Mr. Greening.

MR. GREENING:
I am not quite clear on a question asked by Mr. Fenwick. Not in your capacity as parliamentary assistant but as a backbencher, do you feel that you are representing only your district or all the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

MR. WARREN:
Well, I was elected by the people from Rigolet to Nain. Naturally my first concern is making sure that those people are well looked after, well cared for, making sure that they will vote for me the next time around.

If I decide to go to Sunnyside in the district of Bellevue to attend a garden party, or to meet with the PC executive in Sunnyside, as a backbencher, or regardless of what position I am in, that is up to me. I might be thinking of running in Bellevue the next time, so it is only right for me to make sure that I get to Bellevue as often as I can.

Maybe what I am trying to say is, "Look, Bellevue is a Liberal district, now, if I keep going out there, or Glen Greening, or another PC member keeps going out there, maybe we can get Bellevue to vote PC." That is a strategy that you have to use yourself and I think it is up to you where you get the finances from, but not from the Treasury.

MR. GREENING:
Well, the reason I ask is I have lots of requests from other districts and I have been getting complaints from other districts and, maybe because I am on the government side, I do not know, but I have been asked to visit and I have visited at my own expense, which I do not think I should have to do. I think it should be paid for by government. Then, again, I am also the liaison between youth and the caucus, so I may have to visit thirty, forty or even fifty-two districts, I do not know, but I do not think I should have to do that at my expense. I was elected by the district of Terra Nova, but I think I also represent all the people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

MR. WARREN:
Well, your role as liaison between youth and the caucus is a political party decision, and that should be up to the individual party's finances, not up to government. That is my feeling on that issue.

But I feel that if we as politicians want to travel throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, more power to us, let us do it, but do not expect the government of the day to pay for it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, I want to have another round because this gets more intriguing by the minute. Would Garfield tell us is there any forestry component in your district?

MR. WARREN:
Yes.

MR. SIMMONS:
Any deep-sea component in your district?

MR. WARREN:
There is a shrimp licence issued to Torngat Fisheries Co-op.

MR. SIMMONS:
But otherwise you would say the deep-sea component is very limited?

MR. WARREN:
Yes.

MR. SIMMONS:
Would you feel qualified to vote on legislation affecting the future of the deep-sea fishery on the South Coast of Newfoundland?

MR. WARREN:
No.

MR. SIMMONS:
Would you abstain?

MR. WARREN:
Not necessarily.

MR. SIMMONS:
How would you prepare yourself to become qualified?

MR. WARREN:
Well, Roger, I think you are asking me questions that, first and foremost, maybe I should not even respond to, but I will. I will prepare myself as I have done

for the last six years I have been in the Legislature. When I have something to contribute, I will speak; if not I will not speak at all, I will use my voting privileges the same as any other member of the Legislature.

MR. SIMMONS:
If more people followed your example we would have a smarter House, but that is not the point I am making. Surely you are required as a legislator, or you are expected to cast votes, as I am, on issues that I know absolutely nothing or very little about. I can either do it in ignorance or I can seek ways to become informed. You anticipate the next question, I am sure. Would you see the opportunity to visit those deep-sea areas as a worthwhile way of your becoming informed on those issues, since, as a legislator, you are required to make decisions affecting these people anyway?

MR. WARREN:
I have no problem agreeing with you. What I am saying is I do not think this is the time to ask government to support Roger Simmons or Garfield Warren or Rick Woodford going to other districts in the Province. Roger, if we do that we are playing a big political football with our system, in my opinion.

MR. SIMMONS:
I have another view but it is not the time to state it. We are supposed to be asking you questions and getting your views.

MR. WARREN:
Right, Sir.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, another question arises from some comments that Garfield has made. In your view, should the MHA's access to his district, his access to services to perform his job, his access to the people who elected him in any way be coloured or influenced by where he sits in the House, whether he is in government, whether he is a backbencher supporting the government, whether he is in the official Opposition or the other opposition party, or whether he is a parliamentary secretary or a Cabinet minister? As an MHA, should his position vis-a-vis the government in any way limit or enhance his access to his constituents?

MR. WARREN:
I do not think it should. What I have expressed today concerning district office space, the number of trips, and district allowance shows I think all members should be treated better than they are treated now. All members. Everybody.

MR. FENWICK:
On the question of office space, Garfield, would you be willing to ask Haig Young to give me back my office up in Labrador.?

MR. SIMMONS:
You are being unfair to Haig, so I have to pick up for him. Haig had it right when he said in the House that day that it only leaks down there when it rains. He was right.

MR. WARREN:
Are there any further questions? I have a closing remark I want to make.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
I just want to repeat that the Committee is master of its own rules, and the Committee decided at the outset that for purposes of public hearings members would not

challenge anything said by witnesses who came before the Committee. We have to live by that. I for one, and I am sure my colleagues agree, we defend that petition because we are not here to provoke argument, we are not here to disagree. Certainly we members of the Committee have a profound opportunity to express our views among ourselves and to frame our points of view in the final report.

I want the hon. member to be assured that I have allowed discussion for purposes of his elucidating the points that he made. While members might have seemed as though they were challening or disagreeing, they were eliciting more detail from the hon. gentleman.

MR. WARREN:
I thank you, Mr. Chairman. In fact, I found it very, very informative this morning listening to the comments and questions the Committee asked me. I expressed my views and I think that we are not very far apart. I do not see that we are very far apart at all. I think the only difference that I saw through the whole hour we talked was probably the difference in the number of trips to the districts. Well, I would like to close by using the old Newfoundland adage, "A half a loaf is better than none."

MR. CHAIRMAN:
As a final note, a brief question requiring a brief answer. We agreed that a member of the House has a first responsibility, obviously, to his constituency and the people who live in it in whatever aspect and whatever problem area they might find themselves in. That is number one. However, in the broad sense, and I think this is where the discussion centered this morning, a member of the House has a responsibility in terms of the whole Province for making laws, for taking positions, for voting on various issues. I think it is in that vein that some of my colleagues were raising questions to you in terms of travel. My recollection is that our discussion flowed from.that broader responsibility. Have you a final comment on that?

MR. WARREN:
My final comment is to say again that my duty, first and foremost, is to the people from Rigolet to Nain. Mr. Lush's should be to the people from Gambo down to Cape Freels, whatever the case may be. If Mr. Lush or Garfield Warren is interested in travelling throughout the Province, at this time in our economic condition I do not think it feasible, possible or reasonable for us to even request government to foot the bill. I would love to be able to have the opportunity, with very little expense, of travelling throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. What a good holiday! Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much, Mr. Warren.

I should inform members that there has been a slight mix-up with the agenda. Mr. Jamieson, who was to appear this morning, will appear tomorrow morning at the same time, at ten-thirty.

MR. SIMMONS:
Just for the record, did he change or was there just some mix-up?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
There was a mix-up.

MR. SIMMONS:
I see. There was a mix-up. He is coming tomorrow morning. It got on the schedule for this morning for some reason.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes. He called this morning. Up to last night he was expecting to get back to St. John's today but he had to go out of town to his constituency to deal with a problem. He had to go with some people in Fisheries.

It is possible, I suppose, he may get to appear before us later.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, in light of that, may I make a suggestion to the Committee? The ad that appeared in the paper, and I presume all the press, did not indicate a termination time. It said we would have hearings at 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. We have been here now since ten-thirty, so I would assume that anybody coming in off the street, anybody who had not given us prior notice, would have been here by now for the morning session. I would suggest that we recess the hearing until two-thirty this afternoon.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Is there a seconder for that motion?

MR. FENWICK:
I second it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
On motion, Committee adjourned until 2:30 p.m.

The Committee met at 2:30 p.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Order, please!

We have one of our colleagues, Mr. Gilbert, who is interested in offering the benefit of his views. Our agenda calls for Mr. Carter at 3:00 o'clock. Mr. Gilbert, you can take your seat up there and we will commence.

I will just say one thing to you. We have advised people appearing before the Committee that we have interpreted the terms of reference of this Committee in its broadest sense, and you are very much in order, therefore, to comment on and to make recommendations on any aspects of the functioning of the Legislature in relation to the members of the House. So, with that kind of wide scope, you are on.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to thank you and the Committee for giving me the opportunity to appear before you.

I thought about this since I heard the Committee was going to be set up. As a new MHA I was amazed at some of the stuff I found when I went into the House for the first time. My first source of amazement was the office space that was assigned to me as an MHA. Now I have been involved in business for the last twenty-five years and I have found in business, if you are going to give someone a job to do, you must provide them with the tools to do the job.

I think it goes without saying, when you walk into a situation like we walked into this year in April where two MHAs were sharing an office and are still sharing an office, it leaves a little something to be desired as to the efficiency with which we can carry on our job. In business you would not put anyone in that situation and ask them to try and do a job for you. But we, as the elected representatives of a district in Newfoundland, are expected to go in and perform and function in these facilities. I would certainly not expect any of my employees to work in the kinds of conditions that we are subjected to.

I am sure that when I draw your attention to the fact that an office that is about as big as the hollow square in there has two MHAs using it and they are trying to make phone calls, if someone from your district phones in and the other gentleman is there interviewing one of his constituents who happens to come in, it leaves an awful lot to be desired.

I think that the people of Newfoundland deserve better than this and they want better than this from the elected representatives that they have there, whether he be government or Opposition. I am sure that they feel and I feel they are entitled to better facilities than this.

If they want to talk to the member of that district, they, at least, should have the right to do it in privacy and decency. Common decency is not even adhered to with the facilities that we as Opposition MHAs must suffer, and I am sure that the backbenchers on the other side are in the same position as far as office space is concerned.

It is an indignity on the people of Newfoundland, not so much on us as members, but an indignity on the people of Newfoundland who elected them when they are forced to be subjected to this sort of treatment.

I am sure that the constituents expect more for the person who represents them and more for themselves than they are getting in this particular case, because the member is not able to perform the function that he should with the facilities that he has.

That was my concern as a new member. It was with amazement - I could not believe it - it was unreal to imagine that people were suppose to work in these conditions, to perform any sort of a job function. Anyone who has had any experience in trying to run any kind of an operation will find that the first thing you have to do is you provide people with the facilities to do the job. And, yet, we as MHAs have a very grave responsibility, as far as I am concerned, to the people of Newfoundland, the people who have elected us, and we not just been given the facilities to do it.

The second part of my concern were the funds that are available to travel and to provide facilities in your district.

Firstly, we get funded at a certain rate. It is so much per mile or something and it does not cover your out-of-pocket expenses to go to your district. In my particular case, I am representing one of the rural districts. I suppose, with the exception of Coastal Labrador, it is one of the hardest districts to service because I have coastal communities you must travel by boat, if you are lucky enough to get a coastal boat when you are there, otherwise you have to hire a boat. In my particular case, I can claim $339 if I have to go to Burgeo and that would be mileage if I drove. Now if I had to leave St. John's to drive to Burgeo, the time limit is involved there, and it would not cover my gas mileage on any car to go to Burgeo and return. I have to go to Francois, Grey River, Ramea, McCallum out of this $339, if this is what I am allowed.

Then I am allowed twelve trips a year. So in essence I am really not allowed twelve a year. If I want to cover the expenses from the expense allowance that is given me as an MHA to service my district, I can travel about six trips a year to that district. Again, I think that the people who elected me deserve better service than that and they want it. I am unable to provide it - unless I go into my own pocket - on the allowance that is given me by the government to service the district. I think this should not be expected of anyone who is elected. If he is elected, he should be given the facilities to do the job.

In this case, regarding the twelve trips a year, the formula might be fair. What I am saying is the number of trips should be increased or at least the money so that when he goes to his district his expenses would be paid for the trips to the district. At the twelve trip limit they give us now the most we can do and cover our expenses I would say would be eight and I do not think that is enough. What I am saying is that allowance should be increased or the frequency of the trips increased.

I think that in districts where there are provincial buildings, offices should be provided for the MHA, whether he is an Opposition MHA or a government MHA. These office facilities should be made available as a service, not to the MHA, but as a service to the people of the district, the people he represents because whichever side of the House he sits on, he still represents the 10,000 people or whatever who are in that district. I feel that they are entitled to the decency to be able to go into a provincial building and talk to the MHA whether he be a government or an Opposition MHA. I feel very, very strongly that this should be done.

In my own particular case, I have had to go and I have managed to talk to the town councils in my area and in most places where there is a town hall I have now arranged this. But it is out of the goodness of their heart and if there is someone else there that day, you have got to go to another building or the fire hall. But, I must say, municipal governments co-operate and provide some sort of facilities but I do not think it should be. So in cases where there is not a provincial building, I feel that there should be an appropriate allowance made to an MHA so he can set up an office in the district, albeit temporary, but at least a physical plant there that people can associate and say, 'I know the MHA is going to be in the district next Thursday and I know where he is going to have to go'. It should not be a case where this week he is going to be in the fire hall and next week he is going to be in the community Lions club and the next week he is going to be in the town hall. The people of Newfoundland deserve to know that their representative in the provincial government has a permanent place in that district, a place where he can be reached.

This, again, is an indignity that the people of Newfoundland are put through because of the system and the operations that an MHA is supposed to live by and the allowances he is supposed to live by. There is no dignity for the people. My concern is more for the people than the member. They are not getting the service that should be provided for them.

When we say it is all right to stick two to an office and things like that, it is great, but I mean it is not the members. We can live with that. Those of us who are involved with it can live with it, but we cannot do our jobs. If we cannot do our jobs the people of Newfoundland are not being serviced. If it is going to do anything, this is the area that this Committee should place their main thrust as far as I am concerned.

I wonder do the people of Newfoundland know that they have been denied the services they expect from their MHAs simply because he has not been provided with the necessary funds to do the job that he was elected to do. This is my opinion. That is why I chose to appear here this afternoon.

As far as the salary is concerned, I read a quote in The Telegram from the hearing in Corner Brook that I think is very appropos. It says that you have to be either independently wealthy or on welfare if you are going to live on an MHAs salary. I feel that that is true. I feel that something should be done about it.

But that is not my main concern, my main concern is the facilities that I have to operate and perform my job and the necessary funding so that I can visit my district and provide the service they elected me for.

Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you.

Some other members might have questions, but before they do, let me ask you Mr. Gilbert one question. On the number of trips, would you offer any suggestion as to the number it should be? It is twelve now. Have you any particular figure in mind or have you had a chance to think about it?

MR. GILBERT:
I have not really thought about it as a number of trips. You would have to look at it one way or the other, Mr. Chairman. You would have to say the number of trips should be enough to at least let the member get into his district, I would say, a minimum of twice a month.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Twice a month.

MR. GILBERT:
Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Twenty-four then, twenty-four or twenty-five.

MR. GILBERT:
Give it thirty, that would leeway people. Thirty would be the minimum that I would say he would be able to service his district.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I see. Okay, thank you.

Any questions?

MR. SIMMONS:

Just a follow up to that very specific one. I thank you Dave for coming. It is good to see you. What parameters or what conditions would you place on that? Are you talking about thirty accountable trips, that is to say reimbursement for actual trips taken. Is that what you are saying?

MR. GILBERT:
What I am saying is that they have established a system with so many dollars per trip. If we decide on thirty trips, I think they should be paid and then the people will decide. If the member decides to take his thirty trips and not go to visit his district the people will get a chance to decide in four years time whether he went or not. It would be a foolish man who would take his trips and decide he was not going to go. To me that is sort of ridiculous.

If I am elected to this office I feel that the thirty trips should be - or whatever the trips should be - here it is, it is yours do it and if you do not the person who is going to vote in the next election, he will know whether you are doing your job or not. All I am saying that this money is available to make you do your job better.

MR. SIMMONS:
Since April, any idea how many trips you have taken from St. John's to the constituency?

MR. GILBERT:
I have taken eight trips so far on both sides of my district. It is a little different district as I have to go on one side to Bay d'Espoir and then on the other side I have to go to Burgeo, Ramea. So between the two of them I have had eight trips.

MR. SIMMONS:
You have visited your constituency or some part of it eight times.

MR. GILBERT:
Yes.

MR. SIMMONS:
Eight in five months and you are entitled to twelve so you are going to run out somewhere, are you?

MR. GILBERT:
I would say by the end of October I will be out.

MR. SIMMONS:
On the subject of offices in the district, I am not wanting to get into a debate with you but I can see your situation being quite different than, say Len Simms in Grand Falls, just to pick one that we both know, where his constituency is the town in effect, and everybody is within a five or ten minute drive of the office, if there were one. In your situation, where would you put an office?

MR. GILBERT:
Well, that is the reason I said where there are provincial buildings in the district. In mine I do not think you could have a permanent office as such, that is why I referred to a part-time situation. I think you would have to establish in every place there, there is a certain place that the member was going to be and for this you are going to have to pay some sort of a fee to guarantee the permanency of that thing, whether it be in Ramea on Thursday, and Burgeo on Wednesday and Grey River on Tuesday. It is important for people to know that when you come to that community there is a place to come and for that you are going to have to pay

some sort of a finders fee or set aside fee for the convenience of your constituents.

In a district like mine, you could not put in one office. In a district like Windsor-Buchans you could I guess or Grand Falls or all of the St. John's districts, of course, that would be very easy. You know the rural districts like mine would be a little difficult to say you are going to have an office in one place or the other. It would have to be more or less - how would you put it - a place that was semi-permanent so that they knew you were going to be there rather than say in the office for the MHA in my particular district in Burgeo. That would leave the rest of the district just the same as if I had it in St. John's.

MR. SIMMONS:
But I guess, without putting words in your mouth, what you are saying in general terms is some mechanism or locale whereby there is access to the member when he is in the community. Is that what you are saying?

MR. GILBERT:
Yes.

MR. SIMMONS:
I have got a seat not unlike yours and it would be a problem having twenty-three offices, although I have twenty-three communities. I do see the need for a contact point.

MR. FENWICK:
I do not really have any questions, just for curiousity's sake, under the travel regulations you have to calculate the distance from St. John's to a mid point in your district and I was just curious as to how you actually calculate a mid point in your district. Is it somewhere out in the water somewhere?

MR. GILBERT:
Well, the mid point in my district would be Francois.

MR. FENWICK:
Is that the way it is calculated then?

MR. GILBERT:
Yes. If you took the mid point in technical terms, it would mean I would drive to Burgeo and then how we get the mileage to Francois, that is the one that is still in question. We have not really figured that out yet. There is no road so how do we get there?

MR. FENWICK:
You are likely to flood your motor, are you not?

MR. GILBERT:
Yes.

MR. SIMMONS:
Anybody else with any questions?

While you are here, Dave, you have got time, we have got time. You talked about office space in St. John's. Any other aspect of the services available to members that you would like to comment on, either the library services, the research capability, information retrievement, anything at all that you would want to give us your views on?

MR. GILBERT:
Well, the office space was, I guess, the most salient one and the one that I was most amazed at but the other thing, of course, is the fact that as an MHA I still have to share a secretary with another colleague of mine which makes for not a very efficient job

for the people in the district that I serve because it is virtually impossible. You people who are on this Committee realize that we are in a business of paper flow and for a secretary to be expected to provide the paper and to make sure that the correspondence gets back to our district that we are required to answer every day is virtually impossible. The girl is overworked and, again, we are not providing service to our constituents that they expect.

One of my other recommendations would be that each MHA have a secretary who is responsible to him and him alone.

MR. SIMMONS:
Can you indicate to the Committee, and if you cannot do it off the top of your head perhaps you would undertake to do it to us subsequently in writing, what is your average number of telephone calls is per day or per week and/or letters per day or per week related to the constituency?

MR. GILBERT:
I cannot but I can get it for you. There is a record of it back there and I can write the Committee a letter and advise them what the paper flow would be, on a daily and weekly basis.

MR. SIMMONS:
Any further questions? If not it remains for me to thank you, Mr. Gilbert, for taking the time to come and give us your views. We shall take them under advisement as we prepare our report.

MR. GILBERT:
Thank you.

MR. SIMMONS:
It is my pleasure now to invite Mr. Carter, our colleague from St. John's North, to join us.

For the record, I just state that what we are doing at this point in time is receiving input from the public including, of course, our colleagues in the House on matters related to our mandate.

The motion striking this Committee implies a very broad mandate and we have interpreted it so. If there is anything to do with the member's ability to do his job, we have decided it is within our mandate. So please feel free to take a fairly wide latitude.

If you do not mind, John, when you are finished any opening remarks you might want to make we would like to have the opportunity of putting some questions to you, if you are agreeable.

MR. J. CARTER:
Yes, Mr. Chairman. I have a prepared statement. It is very short and I thought I would read it and comment on it as I go through. I have some copies here for people who are interested. Then I would be more than happy to answer questions and to enlarge on it because it is as brief as I could make it.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, what other jurisdictions do about remuneration and office space for MHAs should not concern this Committee. We have our own problems and should be able to manage our own affairs without having to copy others. We ought to know what we can and cannot do. The only advantage to be taken from looking at our neighbors is to hope to avoid their mistakes.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think it is fruitful to say, 'Oh, the people in Saskatchewan get this or the people in the Northwest Territories get that'. I think Newfoundland is in a unique position. I think our problems are unique. I think they even differ from district to district. Therefore, to say because they do this in New Brunswick, we must do this in Newfoundland, I do not think is a fruitful line of approach. Therefore, I recommend against that. That is my own opinion and I am sure you feel free to disagree.

We must look at this problem from all sides. Legislators used not be paid at all. It was felt that a representative ought to be able to put his own affairs in order before presuming to decide for others. This argument is still relevant today, especially now that our Province is so short of money.

We are at the stage now where higher taxes will only hurt the economy. We would all liked to be paid more but where is the money going to come from. We abdicate all moral authority in favour of restraint if we attempt to enrich ourselves.

Furthermore, if a member is highly paid, can he remain independent? He may be unwilling to jeopardize his lucrative position by taking an unpopular stand. It is sometimes necessary to take such a stand. It can take time for an issue to fall into perspective. A hasty, knee-jerk reaction is easy and tempting.

But paraphasing Edmund Burke, we owe our constituents close attention to their wishes, first call on our time, but most of all, we owe them our judgment and we betray, rather than serve them, if we bow before every wind that blows, because that judgment is clouded by personal considerations.

Now, I have paraphased what Burke said there because he was rather long winded and he went on at great length, but that is the meat of what he said - we are elected because of our judgment. Our judgment can sometimes be faulty, it can sometimes be very bad, and we can be unelected. But I think that the independence of an elected member is the cornerstone of our democratic system and I think that must be borne in mind during all of our discussions.

For the relief of members, on the other hand, on the other side of the coin, an argument frequently heard in defense of increased salaries for members is that of parity. It is felt that legislators should at least receive an average wage. Now what an average wage is is difficult to agree on perhaps. This is a cash economy and no one should be out of pocket because he has successfully sought public office. If we are going to be fair, we must agree that some members have greater expenses than others. Those who represent distant districts and those who live so far from the Legislature that they have to maintain two residences, should receive proportionally more. There is also the cost of frequent trips to the district, and the last witness, I think, went on at some length on that matter.

But here I would like to point out that every district is different. I do not think that you can find any two districts that are comparable. It may well be that all fifty-two districts may have to be handled differently or rather, I suppose, you could make a rough difference between the urban districts and the rural districts, but all of the rural districts I would argue are different.

So I would like to say this, continue to pay members what they are getting now, but make special concessions for out-of-town MHAs to make up for their extra living and travel expenses.

Cut out all extra benefits such as free long distance telephone and mailing privileges and substitute a fairly, adjusted lump sum payment, taking into consideration the special needs of each district.

A list of all MHAs and their district and the benefits received should then be published yearly.

No doubt member will clamour for more, but they can then base their claim on careful records showing just what their needs are. The point is that an upper limit must be substituted for the open ended arrangement now in place.

My personal observations of the office facilities for government and Opposition members is that they are more or less adequate. Two to an office does not appear to me to be unreasonable. What I would recommend is that in future when changes are made that members offices be located as close as possible to the Legislative Chamber so that useful work can be done while the House is in session.

Now I understand there is to be a new Legislature Chamber constructed on the ground floor of Confederation Building, and plans are now quite vague, but they are being drawn up. I think now is the time. I think it would be an ideal time for the Committee to point out and take an active part in making recommendations for the physical planning of the Legislature because, I think, the present Legislature, although it has served us well for a number of years, has certain glaring inequities and certainly there is room for improvement. I do not think that it would be worthwhile to tear apart the present Legislature just to make these improvements. If a new one is going to be constructed, then it is just as cheap to construct a sensible one as a foolish one, one that does not serve our needs, one where there is not any room to move about or where there is no room to receive constituents or where there is not any room to talk to the press or talk to each other. I think we can all give examples of what a good Legislature would be. I would go further and suggest that, although I have been in a number of Legislatures across this country and outside of the Province, I have yet to see one that really fulfills all the things that I believe a Legislature should. And, perhaps, the Committee has not considered making these kind of recommendations, but I would urge the Committee to do so.

This is my submission, I have signed it. The others are just copies. I think I should present the signed one.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you, Mr. Carter.

Your presentation I am sure will provoke some questions. I will be surprised if it does not. I have one for you, and may I say, before any questions are raised, it is not the Committee's place to challenge what is said. We are hear to listen. We do not challenge what you or anyone else says. But we question people who come before us to give them an opportunity to elucidate their points and to make sure for the matter of record that we have got the message clear in our minds as to what you wanted to convey to us.

In that context, I find your presentation very interesting - different, but very interesting - from what we have heard to date. I followed your comments in relation to, and I underline the term, the independence of the members of the House as the cornerstone of democracy. Would you tell me how you reconciled that with the fact that certain members have to find something else to do to supplement their income.

When you are suggesting that whatever changes are made be made in terms of lump sum payments insofar as services are concerned, let us just look for a moment at the basic indemnity and the fact that some people have to find other things to do - people with families - to supplement what they are paid. Do you have any problem in reconciling the two when you say that it is the cornerstone of the system for members to be completely independent, and I agree with that. As a matter of fact it is troublesome on times when I see that people have to look to some other source. Sometimes I have questions in my mind about the desirability of that. How do you feel about that?

MR. J. CARTER:
It is a complex question, Mr. Chairman, but I will be glad to deal with it. For those of us who are already elected we knew what we were getting into. It was very easy for us to find out what the pay was before we even considered running so I do not think that any member who is now elected deserves any sympathy along those lines. They knew what they were getting into and they got into it and they are now into it and they can get out of it if they want.

Admittedly, the sum that is paid is not comparable with sums that can be earned outside in other professions and perhaps in business, at the same time is it possible for some members, not all members certainly, but it is possible for some members to continue on their original line of work on a part-time basis.

I was very careful and I firmly believe that - quoting from Burke - the constituents have first call on our time and if we find that we cannot do the two jobs or pursue any activities outside, I think then the outside activities have to go or else a resignation is in order.

I remember going to St. Bon's College and being taught by the brothers. I wondered why they were celibate and they said, "Oh, they have to be celibate because they have to spend all their time teaching." I do not think it is necessary to be celibate to be teaching or to be celibate to be a member or just have one job. The thing is you must recognize where your priorities are and I think I do, I hope others do too.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you. One other short question. We have been told by a number of people who have appeared on the West Coast and the thread

that ran through the presentations was in term of justifying changes in the compensation package was that the present system tends to invite people, or tends to be an incentive to only certain target groups. Let me just quote to you what has been said to us. A couple of people said to us, "The present system is such that the House of Assembly will be made up, and will continue to be made up of either the very wealthy or people on welfare."

I do not necessarily agree that it goes quite that far but I guess the point that we are trying to score was that under the present system you preclude a number of people. One gentleman appeared for us in Corner Brook and raised very serious questions about the issue of public servants being allowed to contest public office without fear of losing their positions if they were not successful. Along those same lines then what seems to have come true to us is that the opportunity to run for public office and be a member of the House of Assembly should be open to all the population. Have you any feelings on that?

MR. J. CARTER:
Yes, I do. First of all, to deal with the first part of your question, I think a civil servant or a person has to make up his mind, will he be a civil servant or will he be an elected member? I think there is a big, big difference, a very basic difference and I do not think one can be both. I do not think a civil servant can legitimately be an elected member. I do not think an elected member can legitimately be a civil servant.

Now, I would not class teachers, and all those paid out of the public purse, as being civil servants. In the context which I am arguing I would not call a teacher a civil servant. I think if we cleaned up the Legislative Disabilities Act you could open it up for some people who are not now able to legally, legitimately run.

But someone who works say in the Department of Finance as a clerk or as an assistant deputy minister, or as a director, I do not think he or she has any business running for public office unless they decide to resign. I think you are either one thing or the other. I do not think in that case you can be both.

On the second part of your question, where you talk about the membership in the Legislature being closed to people in certain income groups, I do not have much sympathy for people in the high income brackets. They have a great deal of discretion. If they want to they can tighten their belts and let their money pile up and then run. I do not have any sympathy at all for someone who is making $60,000 or $70,000 a year. I am sure they are able to arrange their affairs so that they can do whatever they want to do, even if they want to go to the South Pole. I do not have any sympathy for them but I do have a lot of sympathy for the people against whom the Legislative Disabilities Act now operates.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much.

Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
An aspect of that question the Chairman just asked, I am not sure

that the problem, as he posed it, lies with the wealthy. They can arrange their affairs. That is one of the points he was making I understood. On the issue of civil servants, well we may come down on different sides of that issue. But that does not seem to address the real question.

Is it important that we make elected office at the provincial level open to a spectrum of society? That is the issue. Do you see that as a desirable objective? Should elected office as an MHA be accessible to the farmer or the teacher or the housewife, a good spectrum of society or ought it to be reserved, as would seem to be implied in your submission, for people who can afford to be independent according to the definition you imply here because they have got their own means elsewhere and they do not get their salaries through politics. They must be getting them through some other source. That is the impression I got. Now I may be misunderstanding, John.

MR. J. CARTER:
I would reject the implication you make that the office of legislator should be made safe. By definition the office of an elected member is extremely precarious. I do not think there is any way that you could make it safe. You can make it accessible, but I do not think you can make it safe.

Now on the accessibility, I have pointed out that in many cases people are able to hold on to their old occupation at least part-time and it is not considered improper. There are many lawyers, many professional men run and have run and have stood in our House of Assembly and done a very good job. They have brought with them the skills and the point of view of their particular walk of life. I think obviously people should, rather than come right out of high school to be elected, come from, as you say, a very broad spectrum of society.

If we were a wealthier province we could perhaps up the ante. But I come back to the point that we are not a wealthy province. We do what we can. I certainly agree that people should not be seriously out of pocket because they have successfully won an election. I think those who have to service distant and difficult districts should be helped as much as reasonably possible so that they are not out of pocket and so that they are available and accessible to their constituents. I have no quarrel with that. What I do have a quarrel with is the impression that we should vastly increase our salaries at this time in this Province under the present circumstances. I think we have to tighten our belts. I will be quite blunt about it.

MR. SIMMONS:
You can be assured, John, that one of the factors the Committee will take into account when it is making recommendations that might imply additional costs, if that be the case, that the Province's ability to pay will be a determinant, an influencing factor. So, putting aside the pragmatic question of whether we ought to afford additional costs either for salaries or accommodations or whatever, let me come at it from the standpoint of the principle that you seem to be espousing. Ought we to make it possible for the person coming into politics to get his full

income from that occupation or ought he to have some other income to supplement? That is the question I guess.

MR. J. CARTER:
I suppose it boils down to how high a standard of living a member wishes to have. I think we have to look at what is considered to be an average wage in society generally. On that basis I would think we are doing quite well at the present time. We take home approximately $33,000 a year. That is the basic income, $11,000 of which is tax free. So that is equivalent, by my calculations, to a gross salary of about $37,000 a year under the present tax rates. That is a gross salary after we have paid taxes. We take home that much I should point out.

MR. SIMMONS:
Where I not such a gentle soul I would be tempted to say that it may be easier to take it home if Mount Scio is a half a mile from the building than if you district, let us say, were mine.

MR. J. CARTER:
I acknowledge that.

MR. SIMMONS:
I submit to you, and I do not have to submit, I can document, that while $33,000 may be an accurate representation in your particular circumstance, in mine or that of anybody representing a rural district, the district allowance gets used for what it is intended to be used for. The reason it is tax free in the first place is because it is an unaccountable expense. I have never counted that as salary. Frankly, I wish I could.

MR. J. CARTER:
It is tax free because it is another way of not blindfolding the devil in the dark but it is felt that why should the government pay extra money to Ottawa.

MR. SIMMONS:
You and I have a very different view. I am pleased I have my view.

Let me come back to another issue. You say, if a member is highly paid, can he remain independent? There are those who come at that from the opposite end too, and say that if a member -

MR. J. CARTER:
If he is not highly paid -

MR. SIMMONS:
Pardon?

MR. J. CARTER:
If he is not highly paid, he cannot be.

MR. SIMMONS:
If he is not highly paid he may find his pay elsewhere and compromise himself in the process.

MR. J. CARTER:
That is a danger, there is no doubt about that. But I think that is a lesser danger than the other one. I think to take the argument to, perhaps, its absurd limits, but remember we are paid $100,000 as a member, I do not think that he would be very willing or anxious to rock the boat. I do not think you would hear one peep out of any of the members, in fact, it would be the most silent House of Assembly that you could ever imagine.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Any other questions?

Mr. Fenwick.

MR. FENWICK:
Just give me that last comment. You said if members got $100,000 a year it would be a most silent house. You are obviously referring to backbenchers on the government side.

MR. J. CARTER:
No, because I think that it is very easy to enrage one's own district no matter what side of the House you are on. It is not hard to put your foot in your mouth. We have all done it in the past and I am sure we will all do it in the future. But, I think, we take the risk.

MR. FENWICK:
But is there not just as much of a risk that your silence would be interpreted as doing nothing and, therefore, they will reject you at the next election?

MR. J. CARTER:
There is some truth in that. Yes, I will grant you that there is some truth in that.

MR. FENWICK:
I see there is only one aspect, it is curious that we are in this building when we are repeating this debate because we are repeating a debate that, I think, has occurred in this Legislature when this was the Legislature for the country many different times. I recall back in the first ten or twenty years of Representative Government. You are repeating the same arguments that occurred in about 1840.

MR. J. CARTER:
Not because I heard them, it is because I believed them.

MR. FENWICK:
Oh, I know that. I obliquely tried to suggest that that is where they belong. Really, I think the substance of it is that you were saying that legislators should not be paid, it is mentioned in your paper there, I think, as an argument. They should have its affairs in order before he looks after the affairs of the Province.

MR. J. CARTER:
Yes, I do not see anything wrong with that.

MR. FENWICK:
What do you mean by that in practice?

MR. J. CARTER:
I think if a person has not got the ability to put his own house in order, to have his own income looked after, to have made a reasonable success of his occupation, I do not think he has any right running for public office. I really do not. I think to come out of Grade XI, and say, oh, I think, I will be a politician, I will run, I think that is a travesty. I think it is almost an obscenity to suggest that a Grade XI graduate can bring anything into a Legislature.

MR. FENWICK:
In that case you would have said that someone like Mohandas Gandhi should never have been involved in public life because he has never made any money.

MR. J. CARTER:
Oh, but he did. He did very well as a lawyer in South Africa and you know it.

MR. FENWICK:
Well, yes, but I mean after he became involved in politics in India. The point I am trying to make is that you may have someone who has even taken a vow of

poverty as a priest, for example, who later on made -

MR. J. CARTER:
Yes, but a priest who had taken a vow of poverty is in one respect a very wealthy man. He has no debts.

MR. FENWICK:
Yes, but I would suggest that if he was in the Legislature and not receiving an income he would starve quite quickly too.

MR. SIMMONS:
The rest of us got poor without taking any vows.

MR. FENWICK:
The point that I am trying to make is that your definition of success is only monetary success, he does not hold any others obviously.

MR. J. CARTER:
Oh, I do. But I say I think a person should try to bring something into the Legislature with him in terms of experience. I think that a Legislature is useless unless it is or it does represent a reasonable cross section. Obviously you cannot encompass every particular profession, you need to have far more than fifty-two members. Because there must be thousands of individual recognizable professions and walks of life. But still I do think we have managed so far to bring in a pretty good cross section. There are professionals, there are all sorts of types have come into our Legislature, both good and bad. I do not say a Legislature should be a selective place, I think, we need a cross section. But I do say -

MR. FENWICK:
As long as they are independently wealthy, that is what you are saying.

MR. J. CARTER:
No, I am not suggesting that they be independently wealthy, but I think a person who cannot put their own affairs in order has not got too much right to order other people's affairs.

MR. FENWICK:
Do you perceive the job of a member of the Legislature as a full-time job or a part-time job?

MR. J. CARTER:
I assume being a legislator to give your constituents first call on your time and that has always been my approach. They deserve your first call, they are the ones who if, for instance, you are going out somewhere for an evening and there is a call to be made you make that call before you go out. You try to attend to the business that is required by your constituents before you do your other business. I have always maintained that. Now it so happens that in an urban constituency one's task is often lighter than in a rural constituency. I recognize that, and it may well be and I can imagine that there are some constituencies in Newfoundland where two members could not do the job. I will grant you that, and it varies tremendously from constituency to constituency and that is why I said at the outset that I do not think we can pattern our report, and I say our report in the sense that I will have contributed something to it I hope, I do not think we can pattern our report on what we see in other provinces. I do not think it is relevant or as relevant.

I think for instance Saskatchewan

is probably much more of a pattern than Newfoundland ever will be. I think communications in Newfoundland at certain times of the year are not only difficult but impossible. I think it is almost impossible to get around so you have to live with the realities.

MR. FENWICK:
So what you are saying is that you could be a part-time member in St. John's but that outside you probably would have to be a full-time member.

MR. J. CARTER:
I think it varies tremendously. I think some people can do it part-time, some people have to do it full-time. It would depend on your energy level, on your state of health, on the constituency, on the time of the century that you came into office. It varies tremendously.

Some parts of the Province are extremely well served by public officials, other parts are not, and the parts of the Province that are not well served by public officials extra and I would even deem excessive demands are made on the elected member.

But you see I have always felt that the value of an elected member is his judgement. You elect someone for their judgement, not for their capacity to run around and knock on more doors than someone else, someone who has good sensible judgement. We all I think fail to a greater or lesser extent in providing that good judgement. But I think that is what we are chiefly and that is what we should be. And if we have good judgement and if the electorate believe in us, they will continue to elect us even though we may be very busy individuals. And that is the way I see it.

MR. FENWICK:
I would argue with you about your concept of independence given the form of party discipline that has evolved in legislatures over the last hundred years or so, but that is outside the reference of our Committee so I do not think it is an issue.

I have just one or two other comments in general and then I will just cut off at that point. You are talking about cross sections of society in our Legislature, I think I would like to get back to that. Are you at this point satisfied with the cross section is there or are there large segments in society that are not represented anymore in our Legislature.

MR. J. CARTER:
I think some of the sections are very cross I will say that. I have always been disappointed that more women were not elected to our Legislature.

MR. FENWICK:
You have chosen an excellent time to say that.

MR. J. CARTER:
I have only glanced to one side, I do not know whether they are about to be witness or whether they are just interested by-standers, but I have always maintained a woman say in her forties probably has her family grown up, they are independent, they are out of the house, they are not on the floor, as we say. Presuming she is a married woman, her husband's career has more or less settled down, and a lot of women in their forties and fifties have time on

their hands. This is a fact of life. I think it is a great pity that people with that kind of time and with some mature experience, have not seen fit to get into the rough and tumble of public life. One of the reasons they do not of course is that public life is too rough. You need the skin of a rhinoceros sometimes but I am sure that women could contribute a lot more to our public life if they would get out and get involved.

I do not know the reason why they do not. Our own track record is very poor. We have had in our House of Assembly I think the maximum number of women at any time was three, now we only have one. It is almost as if there were a conspiracy to keep them out. I know there is not but it is a regrettable fact and I would hope that it will change. I do not know what would have to happen to change it, I really do not. I think they would bring a lot of experience. When you speak of the cross section, I do not think you can have a cross section of society unless you do have it reasonably well represented by women. I am not suggesting we opt for a matriarchy but I think some reasonable balance.

MR. FENWICK:
Other than women though, one of the witnesses we heard in Corner Brook was a millwright from the Kruger operation who indicated that the salary level was not adequate to take a skilled tradesman and compensate him at the same level as he was in industry.

MR. J. CARTER:
I am surprised to hear that because I would think that the salary, the $33,000, more like $36,000 is at least comparable to an experienced tradesman.

MR. FENWICK:
We will beat out the labourers at that rate but evidently a lot of the skilled tradesmen we would not catch up to at that point.

MR. SIMMONS:
If you accept that rate Peter, in my case I might accept it, perhaps if I were the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) I would, but I am not getting $33,000 salary. Okay?

MR. FENWICK:
I mean I accept your argument.

MR. SIMMONS:
I am not getting it.

MR. FENWICK:
I would say that one of the points I was trying to make was that if you look at our Legislature other than teachers, we seem to be heavily represented by businessmen which are, from what I hear you say, your preferred type of individual in the Legislature since they have "put their House in order" and they have their affairs under control, at least monetarily. Quite frankly, I feel that we have a hard time recruiting from other walks of society, in addition to women. But that is just an observation, Sir.

MR. J. CARTER:
I think that if you cleaned up the Legislative Disabilities Act, if you straightened that up, I think you would allow a lot more people access.

When the Vice-Chairman says that he is not getting the so called $33,000, he is saying that he has to dip into his own pocket in order to represent his district adequately. I think I have dealt with that earlier when I said that different areas require perhaps different expense allowances. I think it is very hard to make a hard and fast rule for all the members.

But I still say the public will not stand for any perceived enrichment of members and I do not think they should stand for it. I think Newfoundland is having a hard time at the present time and we should be tightening our belts further. I firmly believe that.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Are there any other questions?

MR. LUSH:
I just want to ask a simple questions with regards to the Legislative Disabilities Act. Is the witness familiar with what people might be affected by that?

MR. J. CARTER:
Yes, I understand that anyone who is drawing a salary from the provincial government cannot draw two salaries or cannot draw a salary that he would get as an elected member. This certainly precludes -

MR. LUSH:
I am familiar with it because it stops me.

MR. J. CARTER:
I think I dealt with that.

MR. LUSH:
Yes, but I am just wondering what other groups there might be.

MR. J. CARTER:
I think that there would be, for instance, some health workers and perhaps people who work in the Department of Welfare in the field. Now I do not think a health worker is in administration. When I referred to civil servants being barred from the Legislature I was referring to those who are part of government. I mean the civil service is another branch of government, whereas I do not think a nurse, for instance, is part of a branch of government.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
May I just interject here. The gentleman in Corner Brook who raised this, we got into some discussion with him and I raised a point with him that obviously government might have good reason, for example, for precluding, say, the Auditor General, the Comptroller of Finance, maybe deputy ministers or maybe even down to the level of assistant deputy minister. But his point, which I thought was very well taken, was below that should they be precluded from running for office at the risk of losing their job, at the risk of having to resign. This is where this whole issue came from. He raised the question - and it might very well under the Charter of Rights be determined that there is some validity in what he says - that it is to all intents and purposes the right of every citizen to be able to run for public office without being penalized through the loss of a job or through forced resignation.

MR. J. CARTER:
I do not entirely disagree, Mr. Chairman. The only thing is that a person who starts work with the Department of Finance - we will use that as an example - or the Department of Justice, presumably has some ambitions to rise in that particular department. I do not think that that ambition is consistent with an ambition to run

in the Legislature.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
But surely he can change his mind.

MR. J. CARTER:
He can change his mind, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
And change his occupation.

MR. J. CARTER:
That is where the difficulty arises. I think the dispute that you and I would have would be how far down the line should you draw the line. But I would think that if you view the civil service as the fourth arm of government, the judicature, the Legislature and the executive being the other three and the civil service being the fourth and I suppose the press being the fifth -

MR. LUSH:
I did not finish. I want to pursue the limitations being imposed by the Disabilities Act, as Mr. Carter sees it. Are you saying that you would like to see the Disabilities Act cleaned up? Are you suggesting that it be cleaned up in the sense that, to use my own example as a teacher, I would be allowed to teach and also allowed to be a member?

MR. J. CARTER:
Yes, provided -

MR. LUSH:
And draw two salaries?

MR. J. CARTER:
Yes, provided that your teaching job was not affected and provided that your availability as a member was not affected. I mean if you could not sit in the House because you had to teach and if you could not teach because you had to sit in the House, I think there would be a problem. But there is no reason in my view why you could not do it on a part-time basis.

MR. LUSH:
How does that fit in with the package of economizing? I would get $40,000 as a classroom teacher and then I would get the salary I am entitled to as an MHA. You would be driving me up to a nice salary.

MR. J. CARTER:
What would happen if you won the lottery and invested wisely you would also have a nice income. This is the way things work.

MR. LUSH:
But it is both coming from the same pot.

MR. J. CARTER:
Well, as I say, provided that neither job is suffering I do not see any objection.

MR. LUSH:
You just do not like me to get the one as an MHA. You would rather see me get the two, one as an MHA and one as a teacher.

MR. J. CARTER:
Well I would suggest that you would not get a full salary as a teacher because you would not be able to teach full-time. One would have to suffer, that is in the sense that you would have to spend less time at one than you did with the other. I have already stated that I believe a member's job comes first and that the constituents have first call on the member. I think that this is very basic, this is absolute, this is central to the job of being an elected member, that your constituents have first call on your time. Their concerns are first in your mind.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Okay. Just one final question, Mr. Carter. I am having trouble rationalizing a couple of things you have said. I got the impression from listening to you on the one hand that you made reference to somebody coming out of high school and running for public office, and I drew from that the conclusion that you felt that people running for public office should be maybe a bit more mature and established, you referred to independence and so on. Later you spoke of a woman in her forties. Now what I am having trouble with is where are you in terms of people running for public office? For example, in your statement that you have been disappointed not to see more women elected to the Legislature, or for that matter run for the Legislature, are you saying should they wait until they are forty? What is to stop a married lady with a family even at twenty-eight, at thirty, is there a magic age of forty?

MR. J. CARTER:
I chose the arbitrary age of forty because by that time most parents' children are, if not grown up, at least they are no longer around their feet.

MR. HICKEY:
But then this comes back to the issue of independence. Are you saying that they must be independent in the sense that their family is raised, or they are comfortably set financially? The question I am putting to you, does that not preclude public office from certain target groups. We can now add another one to the other groups, namely women. I have trouble with that.

MR. J. CARTER:
It does preclude eighteen year olds. I do not believe for instance, and I am not alone in that, I think the -

MR. CHAIRMAN:
But we are not talking about eighteen year olds.

MR. J. CARTER:
I do not think you can legitimately run for office until you are twenty-five. Maybe it is changed now, but it used to be.

MR. SIMMONS:
We have members who are younger than twenty-five.

MR. J. CARTER:
Yes, I thought that but there was a period when it was twenty-five.

MR. FENWICK:
Senators.

MR. J. CARTER:
It could be.

MR. SIMMONS:
That is the other place you are trying to get.

MR. J. CARTER:
No, I think not. I think we are going to have an elected senate are we not, according to what one reads in the paper.

No I agree there is a problem there but I do think that the independence of members, and the judgement of members, is very, very important and I would like to stress that, however you cut the cake. I know the kind of argument - well if forty is the right age, you know, if people are not mature until they are forty or not available until they are forty, what about thirty-nine, what about thirty-eight. It is a difficult argument. I merely pointed out that there is in our society a large group of adults who have some time on their hands, some time to spare and I think it is a sad commentary on our political system that they do not feel that they can get involved. I cannot really say much more than that. But I do think that is a point worth making.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
At the risk of being provocative, which I do not want to be because our next witnesses are here, I just want to say for the public record that I think when we start talking about age groups and the ages of people I think that is retrogressive. I think that the person who is able to persuade the people of the constituency to elect him, I think that should be the hallmark in terms of age limits. I do not think there should be any age limits.

MR. J. CARTER:
I think that point is well taken, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
That is the true sense of democracy.

MR. J. CARTER:
If the electorate can be persuaded that this person is useful, would be a valuable member if he is one hundred, or perhaps if he is only fifteen, I do not know. I rather doubt that a person of eighteen or nineteen would have much to bring to the Legislature in the sense that you really want to bring some experience. And you know no matter how well you may regard a young person, they do not have the experience, they do not have the years, and years mean something I suppose.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
We have been provocative because there is another question.

Mr. Greening.

MR. GREENING:
I am wondering, do you think a person eighteen or nineteen has enough common sense to vote?

MR. J. CARTER:
Yes, sure. Again, though you get into a difficult argument. If a person of eighteen should vote why should not a person seventeen, if a person seventeen why not sixteen. It is an arbitrary cut off point. For instance, we ran into this when we were trying to organize the Young PCs, we said, "Well what should a young PC be -", I suppose the Liberals ran into the same problem - should they be eligible for membership in this club when they are eighteen, just when they can vote, or perhaps fifteen, because there is usually four years between elections, three years anyway, and if a person is fifteen, in another three years he will be eighteen. So it is arbitrary.

MR. GREENING:
But you submission, I wonder if it was based on generally MHAs or if it was based on say urban or city MHAs?

MR. J. CARTER:
I have only been an urban MHA. I did run as a rural MHA. I did not get elected, but from that experience I realized how much more difficult an out of town member's life is than an urban member's life. I live in the city so I always did feel that someone should live in the area or the same type of area that they are trying to represent. I do not think I could do a good job representing St. Anthony because I

do not live there, I do not have any roots there. I do have roots in St. John's and I think I can fairly represent it.

MR. GREENING:
Would you suggest that the rural MHAs get more pay than the urban?

MR. J. CARTER:
I suggest they get more in expenses, I do not suggest they get more pay. I suggest that they not be out-of-pocket any more than a city member.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Okay, we are running out of time, one more question.

MR. FENWICK:
This is just really a last comment, what you seem to be suggesting is that the most advisable individuals in the Legislature are forty year olds, with independent means, and preferably more women than we have now. My gut feeling about the whole thing is that among forty-year-old male businessmen we have a very low unemployment rate, whereas among eighteen year olds and nineteen year olds we have an extremely high one and it may be a reflection of the priorities we as legislators put on it. In other words, the fact that we are male-dominated, that there are more businessmen than average, that we are of a certain age, may mean that like groups are looked after reasonably well in our society and others are not.

I am just putting that forward as a completely bald hypothesis for you to do whatever you want with.

MR. J. CARTER:
I think our problems of unemployment spring from different causes than our political problems. Our problems with unemployment really belong outside the scope of this particular Committee and I do not want to get drawn into it because I do not think we would get out of here this afternoon. But I do not think you should look upon the Legislature as a solution for unemployed people, although I admit that some unemployed people may have more time.

MR. FENWICK:
Or the independently wealthy.

MR. J. CARTER:
No, I am not making a brief for the independently wealthy but I do say that people should be independent. I think if we do not bring into the Legislature some form of independence, however you get it, whether it be by taking a vow of poverty or whether it be by having wealthy relatives or whether it be by getting your own affairs in order, then you are not really serving your constituents well.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Carter, one of the most independent people I know is my brother. He is a carpenter. If he ran for office he would have to stop driving nails to be the member. Where does he get his income then?

MR. J. CARTER:
I would think that the salary that is paid to members would at least equal the amount he is able to make as a carpenter.

MR. SIMMONS:
It does not.

MR. J. CARTER:
Then he must be a very, very successful carpenter.

MR. SIMMONS:
He is.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
We will have to end here. We cannot keep our next witnesses waiting any longer.

MR. J. CARTER:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much, Mr. Carter. Doug, would you move up another chair please.

Our next presentation is from Dorothy Robbins and Ann Bell from the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Just to make a very brief comment, we have said to the various people appearing before the Committee a couple of things in terms of the terms of reference. The Committee has interpreted the terms of reference by which it was established in its broadest terms. It grew out of debate with regards to the inadequacy of accommodations, office, secretarial help and so on, however the motion and the terms of reference is broad in the sense that you may feel free to comment on just about anything pertaining to the functioning of the Legislature that may affect, in one way or another, the members. So it is pretty wide open. So on that note you are on.

MS BELL:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have taken the liberty of doing just that, of looking at it in the broadest context. I would like to begin by commenting on the comments of the member for St. John's North. The only thing I would like to say to that is it certainly points out that he is out of touch with reality today and that I hope he is not speaking for the provincial government of our Province but speaking as an individual member. I would like to enter that into the record.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, we are here today to address some of the barriers that women face in seeking elected office in the House of Assembly. These are general comments which may well apply to all elected positions, but this Committee has the opportunity to make recommendations for positive changes for the women of this Province.

One of the major developments of the 1980's will be the full-blown emergence of women as a powerful new force in Canadian politics, however, this is not being reflected in our provincial Legislature. There are many barriers to women seeking office and getting elected, not the least of which are within the structure of the political parties. Women do, of course, belong to political parties and are active campaign workers. In fact, since winning the vote in 1925, women have been using it almost exclusively to elect men to office. They haven't had much choice. Women face two major obstacles, a reluctance by male party officials to admit women, who perceive them as not being able to do the job as well as men, in other words, they are considered losers. This is a Catch - 22 situation. It works like this: Women candidates lose because they don't have enough support or enough money to run effective campaigns; they have trouble raising support and money because people think of them as losers; and round and round it goes. Political parties have been all too willing to sacrifice women candidates in marginal districts and not give them a chance at winnable or "Plum" districts and hence they "sacrifice the lamb," as is the terminology that has been going around.

We realize that the issue of change in the structure of political parties is not one that this Committee can address in its mandate. But each of you are active members of a political party and as individuals you can be leaders in working for changes within that party.

Aside from the obstacles of the party structures, there are other barriers to women holding elected office. It is not that women haven't been active participants in small "p" politics.

As a result of the profound and continuing changes in women's roles in our society and the consciousness-raising of the women's movement that has affected their lives and self-perceptions, Canadian women are more ready than even before to express their attitudes, not just in the privacy of their homes, but in programs and action in their communities, organizations, workplaces, and in general public affairs.

Today, women are both leaders and rank-and-filers in the movements for change, and they significantly outnumber men as a progressive force in our society. They are in the antinuclear peace movement. They are among groups seeking security and better quality of life for senior citizens, many of whom are women. They are speaking out for quality care for our children. They are organizing to save their communities from environmental hazards. They are unionizing office workers and spotlighting new technological dangers in the workplace. They are also exposing the degradation of women in the flourishing male-owned pornography industry. They struggle for equality and economic justice with similar aims as minorities and the poor. They are pioneering new kinds of family and personal relationships, working and succeeding at jobs that had been barred to them for generations, and everywhere proposing changes and policies that would make our country a healthier, saner, and more secure place in which to live.

The public sphere then is full of active women, with one notable exception. Despite a more enlightened climate, society still has difficulty accepting the well known slogan of the women's movement - "A woman's place is in the House ... The House of Assembly." As Ruth Mandel wrote in her book, **In The Running: The New Woman Candidate:** she says, "Centuries of history and custom have taught that women belong in the private sphere, rather than seeking elected office, a single woman is still thought to be better off seeking a husband; instead of serving in office, a married woman is expected to be serving here husband's and children's needs first." And that is obviously the feeling of the member for St. John's North (Mr. Carter).

Mothers of young children are particular targets. They are faced with the decision of leaving their family at home, or moving them to the seat of government in St. John's. Men seem to be much less willing than women to change their place of residence and their job to follow a wife who has become an elected official. Public attitude has not kept pace with the new roles of men and women in families. A man who actively supports a wife who is in the public eye, while he remains in the background, has difficulty breaking down old sterotypes. In more concrete terms, since women's average earning power is less than men's, a family depending on the husband's higher wage may not be able to afford the luxury of a husband changing jobs to facilitate a politically active wife.

Women with children face a double standard in public life. Men are rarely asked how they combine being a legislator and a husband and a father. Women often are. When Pat Schroeder of the United States was elected to Congress, she moved to Washington with her two young children and husband who had agreed to change jobs so they could be together. When voters asked her how could she be a mother and a Congress woman at the same time, she said, "Because I have a uterus and a brain, and I intend to use them both".

MR. SIMMONS:
Beautiful.

MS BELL:
Present salary and benefits for members of the House of Assembly show no consideration for special responsibilities such as alternate child care. This is particularly important for sole support parents and mothers who have undertaken the day-to-day responsibility of child care before being elected.

Travel allowances only include twelve return trips a year for a member. Aside from the difficulties of representing a district with such a small travel allowance, it would be an added burden to women with small children. Transportation costs are even more difficult for members with greater distances to travel to their districts.

The present allotment of staff to members, particularly to Opposition members, is inadequate. Since our political system is based on equal representation, all members should have adequate research and support staff. Stronger research capabilities are especially necessary for the official Opposition and third party members.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Hear, hear!

MS BELL:
Obstacles to genuine participation, when they lie in prejudice, in unequal family responsibility, or in financing a campaign, must be approached with a genuine determination to change the present imbalance.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you very much.

Before opening it up to questions from my colleagues, just let me say that, and I speak for myself and say that I, for one, do not find anything there that I would need to question. I think it is pretty clear and I doubt if you would find anyone who is in touch with reality today who would disagree with very much of anything that is in it.

Let me ask you, either one of you, Ms Bell, I am right to interpret your brief in this way that you see the present structure of the Legislature, vis-a-vis district allowances, support staff, sessional indemnity, the whole compensation package and the whole network of services or the lack, whichever way you want to put it, you see that as a deterrent to women or more women getting involved and running for office, in addition to, the issue that you dealt with earlier on in your brief with regards to the structures and the attitudes and the make up of the political party?

MS BELL:
I see it as one of the barriers, yes. Particularly, in view of the women who have been active in the public sector and in the public eye, a lot of the women would not, a lot of them who, particularly, women who are employed would not be able to seek elective office because of the restrictions there. There are many factors, that is one of them, yes. I think it is too restrictive and I think it should really be brought in line with a lot of other positions within the - I cannot give you any specific example - but a lot of other equivalent positions, I think there is a lot of room for improvement there. We do not have specific recommendations for salary level or for benefits level. No, we do not have specific recommendations on that buy. We would have them. I think, there can certainly be a correlation done with other jurisdictions to look at that.

MS ROBBINS:
I just want to make a comment or I could make it at another time.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Go ahead.

MS ROBBINS:
One of the things that we did not really in the brief but it just occurred to us while the earlier witness was speaking was the comment on public servants and their ability to run. As more women are employed under the public purse, I guess, than in any other private business that would be a barrier to women because, I think, there are definitely more women employed within the public service than there are in private business.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman I want to say my own word of welcome to both Ann and Dorothy. We are not suppose to comment on those briefs but if you will permit a brief comment.

MS BELL:
You can comment. We do not mind. We are used to being commented on.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Comment by way of question.

MR. SIMMONS:
Before I put my question I just thought it was a very thorough job and I was particularly intrigued by the very concise way in which you managed to state the new role of women on the bottom of page two and the top of page three, some of the areas of involvement were rather concisely and well put. And the quote from that lady in the States is one I will be able to use, I have not heard that one before, but it kind of makes a point. Do I hear you say, in relation to the top of page five of your brief, that if the salary benefits were more attractive that that in itself would open up some doors. Would get more women candidates coming forward because you see there is a rebuttal. I am on your side of the argument insofar as women seeking office, but there is a partial rebuttal

from party people and very often it is that we cannot make them candidates if they do not show up. In many constituencies a women have not even sought the nomination, not even expressed an interest in having the nomination. I realize that there are also many women who have sought and not been successful but the point I make and the question I raised is, if there were a more adequate salary benefit package, are you saying more women would come forward?

MS BELL:
I think that more women would come forward. Just to go back to your comment, in a lot of areas no women have come forward and in a lot of areas a lot of men have not come forward but then they have been sought out and the parties themselves have not been responsible in looking for an equitable representation of men and women. In essence, apart from Ms. Verge in the House of Assembly, we have a government without representation. Women comprise 52 per cent of the population of this Province and this country and it is a sad commentary. When we look at it also from a historical perspective, and we will, down the road, we will see that. None of the parties have actively recruited women, they just have not done it.

MS ROBBINS:
I might add to that the recent Task Force on Affirmative Action within the public service showed that there were many inherent barriers - what we call systemic barriers - in hiring and promotion. I am sure if you looked at the whole system of how we recruit, if you will, people for political office that those same barriers would be there and are there. A lot of them are in attitudes, a lot of them are in socialization and a lot of other things, but perhaps it is time that the parties particularly started thinking of how they can actively recruit and promote women candidates.

MR. SIMMONS:
Again, just to comment, I think parties are playing catch up on women issues, like so many other entities are playing catch up. In some respects there are people in those parties not emotionally ready, they are mentally ready and all that kind of thing, but they are not completely emotionally ready for what it is overtaking them in effect. As a taxpayer, and not only a taxpayer but as a observer of the scene, I still find something wrong with the statistics. I am not disagreeing with them but when you sit back and see 52 per cent of the population and you see one person in a House. I have difficulty with it because my background was such that I was exposed to the women's movement about forty-five years before most people, given my family and church background and I have real difficulty with it. The specific question, and it is difficult not to comment when you get a subject like this, we have ground rules I should tell you and we are supposed to be listening to you guys and just asking questions and so on, and it is difficult not to get into politics.

MS BELL:
It took a couple of politicians to do that.

MR. SIMMONS:
Well, especially this particular subject, but let me put one specific question to you on

another issue. You talked about the twelve return trips to the district per annum. Would you want to qualify as to what you think would be adequate? Would you want to put a number on it as to what you think might be adequate?

MS ROBBINS:
I would consider once a week would be an adequate compromise when the House is in session and I can certainly think in terms of people who live quite some distance from their district. It is an impediment at the best of times and if you are a member and you are in St. John's or if you are out in St. Phillips, that is not a problem. Even out in Clarenville, you are not that far from your district. But if you are in Humber Valley or if you are in Labrador, it must be a tremendous problem just to communicate. I think in terms of the job that I have and I have the job as the provincial representative with women's groups and with women and just to try and get around to the areas and to communicate with women is just an enormous job.

You can only do so much by telephone. There is nothing like the actual meeting, or direct contact with people that is so important. If you are elected to represent a group of people, I think you have a responsibility to be there at their functions and at their sessions and at their meetings. I think that once a month, given our geography, is not reasonable.

MR. SIMMONS:
So you are saying once a week when the House is in session and once a month otherwise?

MS BELL:
Yes. Well I have not really looked at it otherwise. I think that at least in other times most of the members stay in their districts, I would think, unless they are on official business and then they are transported. So it is irrelevant the rest of the time I think, at least when the House is in session, unless I am wrong on that.

MR. SIMMONS:
Just let me clarify two points though because there is a misconception in a matter of detail there a minute ago, an understandable misconception. A lot of people have the same impression. One is that members generally are in their districts during the year. That is not often the case. My own example is a case in point where you have small children and if you try and decide your domicile, your location, based on the House, you take a five year old youngster out of school in October bring him in here and take him out of school in January and take him back to Harbour Breton or Terrance, whatever the case may be. In practice you do not do that. So you locate where he can serve out the school year. So what happens in practice is that the families either locate in the riding and the politician, the father in all cases except Ms. Verge, is away all the week if the family is in the constituency. Whereas if the family locates in St. John's in the Winter as I do, the father or the politician or the spouse is away on the weekends. But it does work both ways.

The other misconception implied is that if we are on official business we get paid. It depends on where you sit in the House. If I am on official business I get paid if it is one of those twelve trips. If it is the thirteenth trip it comes out of my pocket. Indeed, under the present circumstances, if it is part of the twelve, it comes out of my pocket because while we are allowed twelve trips the limits allowed are not enough to get me from point A to point B. So there is no other access. Either you get it out of the House of Assembly trips or you do not get it. That is what it amounts to.

Now, with that background, you said once a week while we are in session. When are we in session? Roughly eighteen weeks, an average of eighteen weeks?

MR. FENWICK:
Eighteen - twenty.

MR. SIMMONS:
Eighteen - twenty. That comes to four months so another eight months. Your proposal would allow about a total of twenty-six to twenty-eight trips a year.

MS BELL:
It is a lot better than twelve.

MR. SIMMONS:
Pardon?

MS BELL:
It is a considerable improvement over twelve.

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes.

MS BELL:
I would not like to go on record as saying that I recommend this or that. What I am saying is that I feel that their obviously needs to be an improvement. I was addressing the twelve trips per year to the constituency and talking in terms of the problems. I am not qualified to say to you that you should have a trip once a week or twelve trips a year or twenty-six trips a year. I think there are obviously enough people within the system who can do some kind of an analysis of what would be much more suitable.

MR. SIMMONS:
But, Ann, you are qualified. You are a taxpayer. Would you be shocked if you heard that politicians were being reimbursed to travel back to their constituency once a week when the House is in session?

MS BELL:
No, not when the House is in session but I do not know if I might be if I was thinking in terms of once a week for fifty-two weeks of the year. That depends. Still in all I still think too that I am in a different position because I am in the same position where I have to travel at least once a week somewhere and with a very much more limited budget I might add than a lot of other people have and a very restricted budget. So I know the problems are there but I do not feel that I would like to say to you that you should get fifty-two trips to your constituency per year.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you.

Mr. Lush.

MR. LUSH:
Just as a comment, this is not the angle I want to question our two witnesses on, but with the trips, I think there is a very misconception with them. People see them as all expenses paid trips. They are only a straight mileage to a midpoint in your district which means that you have

got to go further than midpoint, which means the twelve trips probably only pays eight, depending on the district.

I just want to get back to something which might not be a mandate of our Committee and it might be - the lack of participation of women. I can speak with the same voice as Roger in my background. Looking at the last election, I can relate to some of the things you were saying. I guess my question is, do you think things are improving? I would think all political parties represented here had a fair number of women running in the last election. And you talk about some plum districts, there are some men who cannot get those. No, but really, I think every political party here had a fair number of women running last time, whether it was enough is another question. But I think it shows we are making an effort. But I want to make a comment, talking about a plum seat, we actually lost a seat because we had a woman running and that comes from that woman herself.

MS BELL:
You lost some because you had men running too.

MR. LUSH:
Right, because the electoral was not ready to accept her. So we are dealing with two things not only the political parties themselves in taking them, and as I say, I think, we all made an effort to get women to run. I guess what I am asking, what do we do in these two points, one from the political parties itself in getting women to run. The other, the more important one is changing the attitude of the electorate.

MS BELL:
The electorate did show that they will support women. They have shown that they will support women and elect women right across the country. I think statistics will bear that out. I will take issue with your comment that there was a fair number of women running in the last election. I cannot remember the statistics, but we knew them at the time. I mean I commented on them publicly at the time, I think of 140 some odd candidates, or just let us say, 140 some odd - how many, Dorothy?

MS ROBBINS:
I do not remember.

MS BELL:
Twenty or something like that were women in this Province. I think it possible that the Liberal Party had the most, they had nine, the NDP had seven, and the PCs had three.

MR. LUSH:
Did that represent an improvement? Or were there less women running this time than, say, in the previous election? Did the numbers running this time represent any improvement at all?

MS BELL:
I would not think it showed any improvement. I did not do a comparison.

MR. LUSH:
They are certainly not in the House after this election.

MS BELL:
No, no, no. But even in the election process, in the whole process of running for office. There was certainly no improvement in the numbers. It is a system where it is very difficult for women to get involved. The

barriers are there. They are well defined. It is not something that I alone or just the Status of Women who are saying, the people right across the country have identified that, the political analysts right across the country. The Prime Minister certainly addressed it with their initiatives and with their campaign to get women involved at a federal level. They were fairly successful at a federal level, much more so than they were before. But there was a real concerted effort at a federal level you must remember that too, to get women. But there were a lot of barriers there as well. I mean, I was privy to a lot of them and I know some of the involvement of a lot of women experienced and it crossed all parties. There is no one party that is great for women. I mean the NDP might have the greatest number of women in a lot of situations, but it is the same situation.

We had three women who are leaders and are very, very active in three of the parties who came in to speak to a group in St. John's prior to the election. They were three very well known, three strong women nationally for the three parties, and three of them told the same story. It is the old boys network, it is the old boys school. The barriers are there, they put them up. Now as individuals you might all say, well, we do not do that and that is just your bias. It is not just our bias, research bears that out.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Mr. Fenwick.

MR. FENWICK:
I agree with you. We were not satisfied with the number of women who were running for our party, by the way, I think, it was one more than you mentioned. I think the Liberals had one less than you mentioned. But I think you are going by Leo Barry's comment, he got them wrong back at the time of the election itself.

MS BELL:
No, I am not going by Leo Barry's comments. I do not know what they were.

MR. FENWICK:
Whatever. But in the federal election, to be fair, we ran more women candidates in the federal election last Summer than the other two parties combined. That was a result of a deliberate campaign. But it was not the numbers that we wanted. The objective was at least 50 per cent of the candidates would women, but we did not come close. But we did have a significant number.

No, the only question that I had, is because you were addressing some of the problems that women would have as members of the House or running and so on. The question that I had concerns the whole issue of child care. Obviously, since our society has tended to put the burden of raising the children on the mothers more than it has on the fathers, that puts an added burden on them. I was going to ask you if there was anything you could tell us about the individuals who have been in the House, I know that both Lynn Verge and Ida Reid, at least, were at the age where they could have had young children or children growing up, I do not know if they do, because I do not know either of them that well, Hazel Newhook, I doubt, the age she was at when she was in politics I would assume that most of her family would have been grown up at the time. But were there problems or are there problems being experienced by Ms. Vegre or Ida Reid when they were in the House in terms of children? Again, it is just asking for information.

MS BELL:
Well I cannot speak for either Ms Verge or Ida Reid. I do know that Ida Reid had school age children which when she was in here obviously necessitated her being away from the children for a period of time that the House was in session. I do not know what her personal problem situation was with them. It is something that I just have no knowledge of. I do know that she has school age children. The only example I really have of problems with that is on a federal level. The federal government - you might recall this - when they changed the rules with regards to travel for the federal government, and this was at the instigation of the now Minister of Energy, Pat Carney, when she, as a single parent, wanted some of the travel to bring her children to Ottawa or vice versa, travel to visit her children. There were travel allowances for a spouse. As she did not have a spouse, she wanted to transfers it to the child and they were very restrictive. But because of the publicity around that, they were able to change it. So obviously there were some concerns with regards to our society and rules and regulations adapting to families and to family situations. I could go on all night talking about the problems with child care.

MR. FENWICK:
No, I was just looking for that particular information. But Ida did have school age children.

MS BELL:
Ida had school age children. Now I do not know if she had any child care but obviously, as any parent would, you have child care concerns when you are away. I am sure, as a parent, you have child care concerns when you are away from your children for extended periods of time as, I am sure, any parent does. However, I have no personal knowledge of any child care problems.

I think that certainly child care and child care allowances should be part of the package, should be part of the system. If you have other benefits, this Committee, when they are making their recommendations, should be forward looking enough to deal with this, even if there are no women now in the House of Assembly who have young children. This certainly should be part of their recommendations. They should deal with child care expenses as part of the benefits package.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Any further questions?

MR. SIMMONS:
Just to follow on in that vein, you know, be specific. If you were framing the recommendation in the child care category, I do not necessarily want you to put dollar figures on it, but what kind of provision ought there to be in that case to enable you or the Ida Reid's of this world to get into politics?

MS BELL:
With child care there should be a child care expense, a child care allowance. If I am a member of the House of Assembly and I have young children and I live in Corner Brook, when I am away from home I should be able to claim my

child care expenses, whatever child care I have. I think that should be part of the package.

MR. SIMMONS:
I hear you now. I did not quite hear you at first.

Just a quick comment. Pat Carney is a very good case in point. She was in Opposition at the time and she made the case before the appropriate committee and travel provisions which were allowable, as you say, only for the spouse got expanded to be allowable for the spouse and family. The point I make is that many of those issues are not woman issues as such. They are issues that affect both spouses, both male and female benefited from the results. For example, when I was in Ottawa, before that my wife could travel to the constituency, but after that my wife and the two boys could travel. The point I make is that very often some of these issues would be better understood by people who get their defenses up too quickly if they were packaged as family issues rather than women's issues.

MS BELL:
Well, it is a good example in point. The example you are giving is a good example of why we need a more egalitarian system of representation.

MR. SIMMONS:
That is right, yes.

MS BELL:
Because often, as I said before, it is women who raise the child care issues, it is women who raise the environmental issues, it is women who raise the nuclear disarmament issues. So if we have to wait, with all due respect to the male legislators to raise them, often they are left out.

MR. SIMMONS:
I reinforce your point because often they are not issues that exclusively benefit women. They are issues that benefit all of us once they become resolved.

MS BELL:
Exactly. They benefit families.

MR. SIMMONS:
Exactly. The nuclear issue is an issue that women are espousing but it is going to affect a lot more people than women when the time comes.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Okay. Just a couple of observations. I would like your reaction to them.

Before I do I would just like to say to you that the terms of reference of the Committee and the time constraints on it to report - we have to report approximately the 1st. or 2nd. of November, ten days after the House resumes - I believe it is fair to say that we have determined that there are some issues that I, for one, would certainly like to see the Committee report on and comment on. But with the time constraints we certainly would not be in a position to make detailed recommendations because time would not permit it and has not permitted us to brainstorm those issues. This one certainly is one of those. I would hope that whilst we would be in a position to say certain things I think the whole issue bears more investigation and more initiative.

Let me make a couple of observations with regard to what has been said. At the risk of straying from the subject - at least I do not think I am because to my mind it is all tied in - the whole issue of women entering public life, it seems to me, and based on what you have said and what other members have said, is all tied into the total package of women's issues, of equality for women in the work force, equal opportunity for women in terms of promotion, hiring practices, affirmative action programmes, the whole bit. It seems to me that whilst the government has taken an initiative now, welcomed I am sure, of an affirmative action programme, I say to you very sincerely that you, as leaders in the womens' movement, will have to monitor that very closely. Not that there is any desire or lack of it on the part of government because I think you have a firm and absolute commitment but the manner in which positions are filled whether it be the hiring practices or the promotion of and filling of positions by way or promotion, the system is ingrained. It is traditional. It is faulted with a number of things which preclude women getting an equal opportunity. I think there is where you have to be both watchful and conscious. That is one step, in my humble opinion, to correcting some of the things that you are raising today with regards to women entering public life.

I think you are dead on when you say that it is a question of attitude, that the attitude has to change. There are a number of ways that that is to be done. Some of them are the things that I have just mentioned. As women achieve their objectives in terms of equal opportunity in many ways and in many and varied forms I think the public will respond. But I think that is the process that we have to go through.

I would like to hear how you feel about this in a total sense because if women candidates, in terms of a political party, are considered losers, you could have a political organization - if I could use the term - that could frighten the French; it could be strong; it could be like a well oiled machine, but, if the determination is not there, if the believability is not there, then we lose.

I think the people in the front lines, and I am sure you have seen some of them, have to be convinced in their own mind that the commodity, in terms of a candidate, whatever they are out to sell to the electorate, can be a winner, and has the potential to win. I believe that is one of the problems we have in terms of women entering public life. I have seen some of it over the years and I think that you have highlighted it and I think that you are right.

So I would like to just elicit your comments on whether you see any recommendations we might make as a Committee, and I would hope, some of the issues we identify which will not be adequately dealt with in the timeframe that this Committee has, that will be followed through on by another Committee or vehicle of some sort, to get at those issues and to do the whole job that needs to be done.

I wonder if you see it in those broad general terms as I have said? I would like to hear how you feel about that.

MS BELL:
I have thought about this at some length and I have given it a lot of thought. I am kind of cynical and I do not know of what value it

would be. My own feeling is that the only way that women get the opportunity to seek elected office is when the powers that be feel that it is in their best interest to put women there or to run women and it is when they are losing. When they are down to a minority government, they will seek more women candidates in other ridings, in other seats. I would say each of the parties the next time round will be looking for more women candidates.

I think that the fact that right is right will not prevail. I am not naive enough to think that because we do not have representation as women in our government that our government, or our parties in power, will recognize that and say, "Oh, we do not have enough women therefore we must really go out and look for women." I think that when they really feel the crunch and they know that the women are on the move, they are going to go out and look for them and until then, we are just whistling Dixie.

MR. SIMMONS:
There is another alternative, you know. I love a plaque that I see from time to time in the drugstores and novelty stops and so on and I am surprised more women do not have it around their premises, it quotes some particular actress but it says in effect, "They say we should be equal to men, but we can do better than that." I have to quote it because I hear you saying that, which is almost a contradiction of what you stand here, here you are saying you are going to wait until they hand it to you.

MS BELL:
No. No.

MR. SIMMONS:
They might never hand it to you. It is an old adage that you have to make it worth somebody's self interest.

MS BELL:
I did not say we were going to wait until they handed it to us, but what I said is that they are not going to give up the power. The men have the power and they are not going to give it up. They will wait until it is to their best advantage before they will go out, I said, and actively recruit. But women are on the move. We have a growing group of bright, articulate, well-educated young women. They are not going to accept the status quo that women my age accept. A lot of women my age still accept the status quo. But we have a growing group of young women whose biology does not determine their destiny, who will not tolerate the tired old men of the country making decisions for them.

MR. SIMMONS:
Okay, I am glad for that part of it. I did not hear that the first time either, because there is another way other than waiting for men to do it, you can go out and stack some halls. I still say, and I am not playing tit for tat here, but we only had twenty or so women in the last provincial election, part of the reason, as you submit, is because the party hierarchies did not think it fit to have more women. But I put it back to you, part of the reason also was because women did not stack more than twenty halls. Until they start doing some of the leg work we are not going to have more women candidates.

MS BELL:
I would say to you that any of the

halls that were stacked for men were done by women. I would also say to you that the majority of the men who got elected I would hazard a guess that anywhere over 80 per cent of their campaign workers were women. Now I could be wrong on one or two, and a few individuals might have had a lot more men, however the majority of people who got elected, the majority of their campaign workers are women. That is very interesting because when it comes down to things like appointments and payoffs down the road when they get various appointments to various boards and commissions and all kind of perks, only, for example, in our Province, 27 per cent go to women.

MR. GREENING:
If men can fill a hall with men, why can not women fill a hall with women?

MS BELL:
You are looking at sociological and cultural barriers that women experience. Women have always been told that what they have to say is not as important as what men have to say, and how you can expect to change that in five years, in ten years. It takes a while, it takes time. But time is coming and what we are looking for from people like you is leadership to help evolve that change. That change will come, whether you like it or not. But if you do not address that and show leadership, then it will come in spite of you. It might be a little longer, but it will come.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
You have provoked me to tell you something.

MS BELL:
That is not easy.

MR. SIMMONS:
You have provoked me because she is implying that somehow we do not want it. I love what you are saying, I want it, bring it on.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
I am agreeing with what she says but there is one thing that Ms Bell says that concerns me and I say this to her in all the sincerity in the world because I happen to be very supportive of the things she is talking about, I happen to believe them very strongly. We strayed a bit from the strait and narrow in terms of the issues but I think it has been worthwhile. I just want to add a couple of things, and in this particular instance, I think it is worthwhile that I be specific. Let me just say to you that what concerns me is when I hear you say that until such time as the powers that be deem it necessary, and I know where you are coming from when you say that and to a large extent I agree, however, I say to you very sincerely that the powers that be, being the government in this instance, in terms of the public sector and in terms of the Legislature which is what we are talking about, the powers that be have delivered in terms of one area affirmative action and let me zero in on that because I was involved. I am saying to you very sincerely that will not necessarily achieve your goals. You have convinced the powers that be and they have delivered by bringing in an affirmative action programme. I am saying to you that that is not always where the action is. I can give you an example and I will.

While a minister, with the blessing of government in a particular department - and I will not name it because you will know, you will know it without my naming it - we saw the need for affirmative action because there was more women than men, yet a miniscule number in management. We took the bull by the horns, I did, with the blessing of government, put an affirmative action system in place and said, we have to make at least some inroads to cure this and then let it settle out and let the system work. So we took some bold initiatives. So now you had the government saying yes, you had the minister on side, but that affirmative action initiative was scuttled when no one was looking and the reason it was scuttled was because of tradition.

It is an awful thing in the eyes of some people if a minister of a government involves himself or herself in filling positions or temporary positions. It is alright, I keep saying, if the bureaucrats do it but if the minister does it, it is politics. Well, now, let us face it, we are not so backward as to not know there are several forms of politics. There are the politics of, oh, my wife taught so and so, we went to the same school together, I know his uncle or her aunt, or whatever the case may be. What I am saying to you is if you want to achieve your objectives here it seem to me that you have to go to the well for the water and the well in this instance is not the powers that be. Well, I suppose it is the powers that be but not necessarily the elected government because the tradition, what is entrenched, what is as hard as that to uproot, to change, to modify or even to improve, is there. It is like a cancer and it has to be dealt with. The only way you are going to deal with that it seems to me is by staying on it, by vigilance, by determination, and especially raising it when talking to civil servants. When you do not get some response and when you do not think you are getting through I think it comes right down to where you have to confront the minister and only then, it seems to me, are the inroads that are both needed and justified and that you people are favouring will come about. Are you reading me? Do you know from where I am speaking?

MS BELL:
Oh, yes. Did you want to comment Ann?

MS ROBBINS:
Well, I was just going to say that I think it was you, Mr. Hickey, who referred to political parties selling a commodity and certainly they are in the business, if you will, of selling a commodity. They could certainly sell some public education or whatever you want to call it on the need for improving the representation of women in elected office. Government could do that and each of the political parties could do it. They have the machinery, if you will, to do that.

There are no role models and I think role models are very important, particularly for young people. When they look at our House of Assembly, they walk into our House of Assembly, they see one woman sitting there and automatically somehow that affects them in thinking, well, she is sort of anomaly, it is not the way it should be. I think all of these things are very important and need to be addressed by education and just education and not just education in the formal sense but a real campaign by all the parties and by government.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
The part that really concerns me is that I know how difficult it is, the job that you people try to do, and I know that we have disagreed in a minor way on occasions. But let me just say from a personal point of view, I associate myself with 90 per cent or 95 per cent of everything that you are talking about. However, what is really frustrating me is that I have perceived over the years that there is a feeling out there among women who believe that they must assert themselves and gain their rightful place in society, that the government elected is the stumbling block. Now I know that in some instances that is true, and I know it certainly has been true in the past, but I do say that you have made some inroads, you have made progress. It is not all lost by any means. And of late there has been real progress. But nevertheless the results are so very, very slow. That is what is frustrating to me and I think this is what I am addressing and I am saying to you.

MS BELL:
Well, Mr. Hickey, I would just like to comment on that too in that within the whole political sphere, perception, as you know, and in the game of politics, perception is the reality.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes, 75 per cent.

MS BELL:
It is the reality. I mean it does not matter, the fact is that it is perceived by people, perceived by women who are women activists, even if they do not know the structure of government, it is perceived by them that government is the bad guy because they are not doing enough. So if you want to improve your image within the feminist community, within the women's community, well then you have to change that perception and we have the responsibility to change that perception.

You just put yourself in my place. I sit in the House of Assembly when you open the session. I am sitting in the visitors gallery and the fifty-two members of the House of Assembly file in and take their seats. There is one woman. Then the heads of the churches all come in and there is seven men, and then the heads of the courts of the Province come in and there are three men and then the Premier walks up with the wife of the Lieutenant-Governor and the Lieutenant-Governor comes in. Linda Black and Bettie Duff they are the only women in the House of Assembly. Put yourself in my place and you be a man sitting in the gallery, and we bring in fifty-one women and one man, and we bring in the Premier who is a woman, and we bring in seven heads of the churches who are all women, and three Supreme Court Judges who are all women, and where would you feel is your place in society?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
There would probably be an uprising. I get the message loud and clear.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Good. Very, very well put. I think that is a genuine answer and I certainly appreciate what you are saying.

In the final analysis I guess what we are all saying really is that there has to be a concerted effort on the part of all of us.

MS BELL:
That is right.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
You on the one hand out in the front lines asserting yourself and raising the issues and ourselves on the other hand facilitating the process.

Thank you very, very much for coming. It has been very informative and I thank you for your brief.

MS BELL:
Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Well, gentlemen today is over. We are finished for today.

MR. SIMMONS:
We meet at ten in the morning.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes. The meeting stands adjourned.

Select Committee
on Member Services,
Accommodations, and Benefits

Public Hearing
St. John's
September 11, 1985

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Order!

Before we begin, let me just very briefly say to you that the terms of reference for the establishment of the Committee are very broad. Chiefly, the Committee was established to look into and make recommendations on accommodations for members of the House, such as office space, secretarial help, services of one kind and another and benefits for members of the House. The Committee has interpreted the terms of reference in the broadest terms, so to speak, and, therefore, anything pertaining to the operation of the Legislature in relation to the members who sit there is fair game for comment. It is a pretty wide scope, so in that context you are on.

MR. JAMIESON:
Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. When it was suggested to me that I might have some sort of contribution to make in view of my experiences, I was delighted to accept and to come this morning. I assume that the best part of this will be in the question and answer period, but there are a few observations that I would like to make at the start.

I suppose my principle motivation in saying that I would come was because of a growing concern that I have about not so much existing politicians or members, although, of course, that is very important, but I see the real distinct possibility and danger in this Province, in particular, that within a decade or so it is going to become almost impossible to get good people to run for political office, particularly for the House of Assembly. I say that not just as a hunch but on the basis of numerous conversations that I have had with people and because I have had, also, during my career, the unhappy task of trying to recruit candidates for an election. When you hear all of the explanations and reasons, you come to the conclusion inescapably, I think, that unless something is done to change the role of the member of the House of Assembly, and I mean that in the broadest possible sense, that increasingly the role of the politician is going to be either a very rich man's game or a very poor man's game. In other words, it is either going to be a matter of people who do not need any kind of financial assistance, who have no responsibilities that will impinge upon their activities, or those who have nothing better to do and who are likely to run on the off chance that they might just make it into the House and have some kind of a career in public life.

Now that is not a cynical comment, I repeat, because it is based on my experience. Therefore, in my judgement it is imperative and essential that this Committee cut through a lot of what one could almost describe as garbage that is talked about the role of the politician and get down to how we are going to resolve this question for the sake of the future.

Now, just to amplify on that point, it does seem to me that whenever any kind of opening occurs within this Province for any sort of job there is a screening process, there is an assessment of competence, there is a general, almost a microscopic analysis of the capabilities of the parties who are looking for that kind of work. We are very slapdash about it when it comes to responsibilities for what is, in many respects, the most important work in the whole Province, running the whole government of the Province. When you think of the number of occasions when political parties have gone into an election with as many as 50 per cent of the nominations unfilled, reaching out for anyone that they could possibly imagine just to fill up the hole, and when you think, as well, of the number of times when that person actually gets elected, then you realize that the screening process and the approach we are taking to it is not, by any means, wholly satisfactory or even partially satisfactory. Incidentally, none of that should be taken as an aspersion on sitting members of the House; I am sure there are as many good ones as there are bad ones and probably more good ones than there are bad ones. As against what I have said, I suppose we have been fortunate in the sense that the system tends to put into place a reasonable number of competent people, but it does not detract, in my judgement, from the fact that when a Premier, for instance, tries to form a government after an election, when the Opposition is putting its spokesmen into place, there is really a limitation on them as to what the electorate has put in front of them. Consequently, what is put before the electorate is, in my way of thinking, very important and deserves much more consideration than it has now, all of which is by way of saying that a very big part of the problem is this increasing reluctance on the part of individuals to take any part in the political process.

Now, it is not exclusively a Newfoundland problem, but we are dealing with Newfoundland affairs here so let us confine it to that. What are some of the reasons? First of all, I think, is the perception of the politician. I think something needs to be done to change this general attitude of people, far too widespread in my judgement, that in some way or other "politicians" are in it for what they can get out of it. Indeed, if you look at the facts of the case, the truth of the matter is that they get very little out of it. If you look back over the years since Confederation, and let us confine it to that, and you ask yourself how many politicians there are at the provincial level, and that is what we are talking about here, who have emerged from politics better off than when they went in, you could count them on the fingers of one hand, and so, therefore, this idea that seems to be imbedded in the public mind has to be changed. I think the media have something to do with that, I think it also has something to do with the role that we assign to the politician.

Now, here, if you will forgive a short historical backgrounder, let me just remind you, if it is necessary, that originally a member of parliament or a member of a House of Assembly, and the word that is in use in so many places 'Commons' is a very appropriate one and a very functional one in this context, these were people who chose to represent their constituents as commoners and who stayed within the particular framework of activity, the basis of earning their living that they always had. It was a comparatively short period of time that they spent in Parliament or Legislature and, indeed, initially they got very little if any recompense at all, it was considered to be part and parcel of their duty to do that. Now that situation has changed.

There are those romanticists, I think, who think that perhaps we can go back to that kind of arrangement, that it ought to be possible for someone to represent his constituents and, at the same time, carry on with his normal kinds of activity. Anybody who has been in it in the last thirty years, certainly in the last quarter century, knows how stupid that kind of belief is. So what do we have? For better or worse we now have what can be called roughly, or loosely, a professional politician. Essentially he is a full-timer. There will be some, of course, who will be able to do certain things and augment their income or whatever the case might be, but I believe that one of the premises on which you have to make your report is the assumption that the politician is going to have to derive the largest part of his income, that is his ongoing income, from his work as a member of the House of Assembly. I see no alternative to that. That is doubly so in view of the growing insistence on conflict of interest and stricter conflict of interest rules, because what that has done, and we are seeing it only within the last few months and, indeed, in one or two examples affecting politicians from Newfoundland, has made it increasingly difficult for people who are in public life to carry on with their normal kinds of activities without coming up against, at some stage, and very quickly now, some prohibition which limits their capacity. If a man is a lawyer and he enters the House of Assembly, there are very definite restrictions on how much he can practice. There probably should be more. Incidentially, I am not talking about the conflict of interest issue here. If a man is a teacher, as Mr. Lush knows, there are limitations on what he can do. Unions are getting to be more restrictive in terms of how many part-timers you can use and that kind of thing.

So without elaborating on that further, let me say that that first premise I think is essential, that you have to consider in terms of what the perks are going to be, what the salaries are going to be, that that member, man or woman, will have to earn a good deal, if not all of his income, from the position.

Now, on the historical note, one other point: Somehow or other, we have come, over to the years, to consider a backbencher as a failure. I think this is a very sad commentary on how we approach public life. We keep talking about this promising backbencher who is soon going to be removed from the anonymity of the backbench and elevated to Cabinet status. Or we hear about ministers declining from the Cabinet, as Mr. Hickey knows very well. It becomes a crisis issue. What has happened is a person is considered no good anymore, or that person is no good who never makes it in the Cabinet. In other words, we have regarded the backbencher, and I use that term because I think it is now in fairly common usage everywhere, we have regarded the backbencher as really a neophyte, someone who really is not of consequence until such time as he moves up the ladder and gets into some decision-making position.

Now, that means, of course, two things: When you are recruiting someone to enter public life, there is very little real appeal in saying to them that you are going to be on the backbenches, and worse, that you are likely to be on the backbenches in Opposition. That is the first thing that you run up against when you are trying to recruit candidates. The second thing, of course, is that, particularly if you are looking for the kinds of people who I think ought to be in public life, you then have to examine what that hiatus in their normal level of activity is going to do to them and for them.

We all know that it is increasingly true, and probably today is almost universally true, that out of sight is out of mind. If you take a young professional, and I will come back, by the way, to more women representation in a moment, even if are able to resolve in his mind all those questions about anonymity, about the inability to make an impression, the likelihood of languishing on the backbenches, if you take all of those and you overcome those, the next thing you have to resolve for him is what is going to happen to his career.

Once again, in terms of public perception it is not generally recognized that the life of the average active politician is less than ten years. Many, many people have gone through the process from beginning to end, either with defeat or resignation, in under ten years. The exceptions are very rare. It would be interesting to look at the present membership of your House of Assembly and see how many other than Mr. Hickey, and one of two others that I can think of, have been there for a ten year period.

But what that means is, and I hope this is relevant to the question of remuneration and the like, that that person has to ask himself, I am going to take this gap out of my business, or I am going to take it out of my profession, or I am going to get leave of absence from my job, or I am going to, for the housewife, take a different kind of approach to maintaining my establishment, I am going to do that for a period, what happens to me when I go back in? And that is one of the most serious problems that I encountered in terms of enlisting good people to take part in politics. Some of you have had the experience, some of you will know what I am speaking about, that suddenly you go back in and even if you have tenure, even if you have security of employment, the whole process has passed you by during those years that you have been in public life.

Now there are always those people who say, well, you know, they will do well enough during that period that you do not have to look after them afterwards. To that I will just go back to my point of a few minutes ago and say name me just one or two or three who may have been in that position.

So, therefore, when you are looking at what sort of package, if you wish, that ought to be put together, one of the things that has to come into it, and has to be faced, and the public has to understand it, is that a pension plan for members of the House of Assembly is not a normal kind of pension plan, it is something which I believe the member is entitled to at the end of his period, whatever his age and so on when he retires, as a kind of transition, a cushion, if you like, to ease his way back into the regular business of earning a living. And that to me, perhaps, is something that you might wish to consider, not necessarily a pension that in the conventional sense of the word cuts in at sixty or sixty-five or whatever the case might be, but something that would be front end loaded, if you wish, depending upon age, so that the person who finds himself either voluntarily or at the whim of the electorate out of the House of Assembly will not find himself, the next morning, wondering what he is going to do to buy the groceries. And unless we can resolve that one it seems to me, there are going to be far too many people who will say, no, it is not worth the candle, it is not worth my while. I repeat, if I am a young professional person, or, particularly, a middle-aged professional person, it is not worth my while to take myself out of the day-to-day running of a particular operation, or a day-to-day job and take this chance on what is at best a precarious political career.

Now I could spend a lot of time at that, but I know, having been on the other side of the table, that the question and answer, as I say, becomes important.

So let me go on to the whole question of, I suppose you would call it perks or whatever, the additional things that are needed. Well, first of all, I can only describe the experience that I had in the House of Assembly as appalling. I say that in light of wide experience at many, many levels of government, and in many, many countries, and I know of nowhere where the member as opposed to the Cabinet minister gets so little by way of support as we get here in Newfoundland. You may have statistics and the like, and comparisons with other places and other jurisdictions, I will argue against them any time. First of all, the Newfoundland situation is unique for most of you, constituencies are far more widespread, there is a vast difference and, therefore, any attempt to measure this against any other jurisdiction is going to be, to some degree, faulty, at least.

But let me just talk about a few mundane things which, nevertheless, make all the difference in the world, in my judgment, in how a member of the House of Assembly carries out his responsibilities. Secretarial help: In 1985 to have members sharing secretaries is, to me, the essence of nonsense. It is not only that, but it is demeaning. It cannot be done. Even in my own case, when I was Leader of the Opposition, I did not even have a full-time secretary. By way of arrangement among ourselves I wound up with what amounted to a full-time secretary. But there is a good deal of confidentially involved, for one thing, and, as you all know from your careers in various ways, you must have a kind of rapport with whoever it is you are working with and they must work with you. But to hear six members of the House of Assembly and myself debating in 1985 whether a person that you elect to run the Province is entitled to half a secretary or quarter of a secretary is just, to me, unbelievable. Certainly, if nothing else comes of it, for goodness sake ask whoever the powers that be are to pull themselves up into modern times and to give everybody at least someone whom they can rely on and someone whom they can depend on and who is exclusively with them.

The other thing, of course, which I understand you have gone over time and time again and I will not dwell on it, is accommodation. Once again, in this day and age every member is surely entitled to some kind of accommodation for himself and himself alone. I heard on the news last night that you have to make arrangements - I think it was Mr. Simmons - to have your partner in the office get out when you have something to discuss with a constituent. I went through that in Ottawa back in the 1960's, when we had two members to an office, and it was unworkable then and it is infinitely more unworkable now, particularly when you are close to your constituents, as you are here, and you have all manner of people in addition to constituents coming in to see you. So as a very minimum, it seems to me, you must have your own office and your own secretary. I would not even think, if I were now contemplating politics, of looking at it without those essential points.

The other thing is, of course, that the caucuses need much more by way of research assistants and support. When you think of the whole complex issue, let us say, of the offshore and you realize that neither the government nor the Opposition backbenchers really had anything like the amount of capability they needed to look into these intricate and very involved issues, it is again quite impossible.

We have media people here, for instance, and I have some experience in the media. Today there are researchers all over the place, there are story editors, there are all kinds of people, yet, again we come back to the point that the people who are making the decisions on behalf of all of the people of Newfoundland have to perhaps do their own telephoning to somebody to find out whether such and such a fact is right or not.

I mean, it is no wonder that the speeches can sometimes be rambling and disconnected in the House, it is no wonder that they sometimes, at least, lack substance. Because there is not the kind of backup that is needed in this day and age to deal sensibly with an important and vital subject unless you have got that kind of assistance. So the whole concept of research is no longer a luxury, it is an absolute necessity if a member is going to do his job properly. So I would certainly, on top of the other two, recommend that there be a very significant increase in the amount of research assistance that is available.

Incidentally, I make no bones about saying that the Opposition, whichever party it represents, should have more than the government members have because the government members have access, they have a caucus in which the Cabinet ministers are present and, therefore, they are in a better position to get the information. There will be argument on that point and it is not a biggy on my part, but, at the same time, I do feel that in some way or other the Opposition has to have the chance to balance up, as it were, the strength that is on the government side with regard to research and backgrounding and the like.

Now, I could cite many other examples but I will move on to the whole question of constituency support. The Newfoundland elector either cares nothing at all about politics and about the ability of his member to serve him or he cares a great deal, and the pendulum is very much swinging towards the caring a great deal. Again, going on my experience, I do not know of anywhere where the constituent expects so much from his member as is the case in Newfoundland, and not just relating to provincial matters, also federal matters, also personal matters. I mean, there is absolutely no end to the amount of demand that is put on the member so, therefore, the whole question of constituency support is, in my opinion, very, very important. When you think about the vast areas that at least some of you represent, the mere fact that you cannot even be there physically except maybe once a month or so means that there is no contact between the member and his constituents, and, therefore, it seems to me imperative, once again, that this be looked at not only in terms of travel, because I have no doubt that the travel will probably be improved to some degree, it is not just the travel, it is the matter of how do you keep your finger, as it were, on the pulse of it, how do you know what is going on in the constituencies? What are the problems that are bubbling up?

My own experience was that in many, many instances a crisis had developed before you even knew that it existed. Because you were, through no fault of your own, removed from the scene, all of this was bubbling up in the constituency and you had no sort of ability to be kept plugged in. Whether that means some form of constituency representative, or another approach, I would leave to those of you who are more experienced in your own areas. I do have a reservation about constituency representation other than the member, and that is that he tends to become the alter ego for the member himself. As a politician you have to be extremely careful that if you have somebody out there speaking for you he is very much in tune with what you are doing, he or she as the case might be. But there may be no alternative but to have somebody on the ground who is, in a sense, touring about, finding out what is going on, doing the spade work.

Incidentally, when I used the word 'secretary' earlier it was perhaps a bit of a misnomer. I think what you need more is someone in your office who is a bit more than a secretary, who is a kind of assistant, who knows where the levers are, who knows where to phone to get this or that straightened out, not just somebody to take dictation or to do typing or whatever the case might be. So this package then, I think, would at least lay the groundwork for enticing more good people into politics, to come back to my original point, but it will not by itself do the job.

Since you said, Sir, that your mandate was being interpreted broadly, I think here, as has been done by Jim McGrath, I think with great skill, in Ottawa, a redefinition of the role of the member of the House of Assembly is necessary to get over this generally widespread assumption that really they are mere ciphers, or merely waiting in the wings for a call from the Premier. And there are any number of things which, in my judgement, can be done by parliamentary committees, or, as in this case, committees of the House of Assembly.

I think the whole question of examining spending needs to be broadened out well beyond the so-called Estimates Committee - as we all know, the Estimates Committee tends, by and large, to be a bit of a farce - and, of course, it is one of the most important functions that the backbencher can do. Traditionally, to go back historically again, that was almost his only function. The backbencher, the non-member of the government, was the person who held on to the purse strings and it was to him that the government had to go in order to survive and in order to get clearance. The process has now become so complex, the lack of research has been so obvious, that you gentlemen can walk in to a hearing of the Accounts Committee and unless you have some particular item to go into you can be snowed by officials, by ministers, by all sorts of people because you do not have the background support that you need.

I mention that one as one example. I think there are other areas and things which standing committees can do. The environment is a case in point. I do not want to suggest that I am in favour of more hearings and more analysis of that sort of thing, but there are real gaps that can make the job of a member of the House of Assembly enormously appealing, enormously satisfying and can, again, project to the public what is needed perhaps more than anything else, and that is an awareness that their member of parliament is doing something, that he is worthwhile, and that he is in fact carrying out the responsibilities for which he was elected.

For now I will end as I began by saying that to me the nub of the problem is the public perception of what the member of the House of Assembly is. If you get past that, if you gain and retain the awareness and respect of your right to it, then these other arguments will be incidental.

How as for the levels, and let me end on that point, how much is an MHA worth? I suppose I have been through at least ten different assessments to try to figure out what the proper salary income, the combined, if you like, earnings of a politician or a member of parliament or an MHA ought to be. Most of the criteria do not work. I said a moment ago, and I repeat, that trying to compare Newfoundland with some other constituency or some other jurisdiction is helpful but it really does not solve the problem at all.

Similarly, if you start to try to figure out a differential between a Cabinet Minister and a backbencher, that, too, is a bit irrelevant. The only thing I can see that might break the impasse that has existed for so long is to come back to what I described as writing a job description. After all, it is done everywhere else. In virtually every other field of employment you have a job description, and if you write out a description of what an MHA job entails, then you can have a better reference point as to judging how much it should pay. I have never felt, by the way, that a member of Parliament or an MHA should ever receive less than an assistant deputy minister. There is a rough rule of thumb that if a person who is holding the purse strings, to come back to that analogy I used earlier, is not worth at least as much money as the third man in a department, then there is something, in my judgement, wrong with the system.

There is one other point I would like to make in that regard and that is that I am very much opposed to accountability on expenses. I think that the amount ought to be established, whether it is a per diem or whatever the case might be, and made as a straightforward payment. Now there are those who say that that is really carte blanche, it is really putting too much onus on the member to spend that money properly. But the opposite is equally true, and that is that it does put onus on the member the other way around, if every cup of coffee he buys in the constituency, everything he has to do in the constituency he has to enumerate it all down and get paid back for it. So my experience has led me to the belief that you simply settle on what is a reasonable per diem or a reasonable amount and you say that is it. And if you cannot rely on the honour of the MHA in a case like that, then he should not be there anyway. So I would strongly recommend against any sort of complex system of accountability. It will inevitably result, at some point down the road, in somebody being either named, or whatever the case might be, as having abused the system, and that will again bring the whole structure into disrepute.

So I see it, I repeat, as being a matter of setting some overall limit and saying within that, 'That is what the job pays, those are the perks that go with it, and now it is up to you to do a good job.'

Now, lest all of this suggest that I believe that members of the House of Assembly are perfect in this regard and that the only thing wrong is that they are being underpaid or have not got the right services, I think that along with the enriched package there should go a much stronger arrangement of accountability to the electors than we have had in this Province, in 99 per cent of the constituencies. There are exceptions. There are people who are conscientious about meeting regularly and doing all of the things that are necessary in order to make the constituents aware. But if you are going to be a professional and, as I said at the outset, a full-time member, then I think it is important that you be perceived to be full-time members, and that if the package is put together with that in mind, then that is what it ought to be. In other words, you cannot have your cake and eat it too. I think one of the difficulties up to now has been the assumption that, well, he is not making all that much out of the House of Assembly, but he has that income, or she has that, or whatever the case might be.

One last point, and that has to do with women in politics. This, I think, is one of the more complex problems. I do not think it has much to do, incidentially, with the reluctance of males to bring women into politics, quite the contrary. Going back again to my experience, I always was anxious to get women candidates and, oddly enough, the ones I was able to get most of the time were ones who felt that they did not have any chance of winning. They had a genuine sense of commitment to a party or to a cause and they ran so that the party would be represented, but the last thing in the world they wanted was to get elected. Now, lest that again be seen as chauvinism, the reasons, of course, were obvious: they were housewives, they had jobs. It was very difficult, for instance, for them to see how they might be able to maintain a family in Corner Brook or Burin and be in St. John's five or six days a week during a session of the House of Assembly.

This is much too complex a subject for me to open up fully or to have any answers on at the moment, but that is really the hang-up, particularly with married women with small children. It is not such a difficult thing when families grow up or whatever the case might be. But that, again, I just throw out for what it is worth. We tried many times to recruit good women candidates, but found that there were just too many complexities for them to take on the job.

This has been a series of somewhat disconnected but, I hope, useful observations, and to the extent that you wish, I will be delighted to answer your questions. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you very much, Mr. Jamieson.

I have a few questions, but I am going to pass it on to my colleagues and let them have their say.

Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
Thanks, Don, for coming. I found your statement quite useful. There were not a lot of surprises in it, knowing you as I do, but it was refreshing in contrast to some of the other things we have heard along the line.

Don, you mentioned pension, and you mentioned the term 'front end loading', were you alluding to severance pay or were you talking about something in addition to severance pay?

MR. JAMIESON:
I do not know whether it is severance pay or whether some other name would be more appropriate. What I was referring

to was something I know about from experience, again, with some members who, let us say, were in their forties and they had served, maybe, a couple of terms - I am speaking principally of the Ottawa scene now - and suddenly they were either defeated or, for one reason or another, they were out. It was then that they needed the help to get themselves re-established. Whether it is a severance pay package, or whether a pension, perhaps, which unlike other pensions is heavier at the beginning and runs down as they get back into private affairs, is a matter presumably for some expert or some authority on pensions to figure out. But the big need, I found, for younger members was that cushion. I know of cases where fellows were literally on the street the next day; suddenly this whole structure was gone and they had nothing. That is the thing, I think, we should avoid.

It also gets over the business, incidentally, of people thinking that after ten years you have a pension for life or something, which really is not true. I do not know about the system in Newfoundland to that extent, but it is not the bonanza that a lot of people think it is.

MR. SIMMONS:
We have given ourselves some strict guidelines on this Committee. I would like to spend some time commenting on some of the things you said, in large part agreeing with them, but we are restricted to questions, so I guess I will stay with the rules.

Don, how do you change that perception you talked about, the perception of the backbencher being one who did not quite make it, one who did not get the call for higher things? One, how do you change that perception, and, two, could you just verbalize for a moment on how you sell the role of backbencher to that would-be recruit to elected politics?

MR. JAMIESON:
Well, trying to cope with the first part of your question, it is a difficult job. Just using Newfoundland as an example, we are hearing more and more about the Peckford government, the Moores government, or the Smallwood government. So we are moving toward a kind of presidential approach to politics. It is no longer a matter of first among equals. We are hearing phrases like 'First Ministers' Conferences' and a whole range of things which no doubt reinforce and entrench the idea that in some way or other we have some person at the top of a pyramid, whether it was Trudeau or now Mulroney or Peckford, as I say, or Smallwood, it does not really make that much difference, and you have a whole series of people down below who are at the Cabinet level but who are there at the beck and call of whoever the man at the top of the pyramid is and then the rest are there as a kind of reserve in case somebody falters.

As long as the media and we, ourselves, incidentally, in conversation and in speeches and so on keep reinforcing this, then the perception is going to be very difficult to change. I think the only way you can do it is probably at the constituency level. In other words, if a man or a woman gains the respect of his or her own constituents and is able, over a great many years, to be re-elected time and time again, then that, I think, is in itself a mark of recognition. The responsibility, in other words, for elevating the perception of the backbencher is very much in his own hands in that regard. I think, as some of you will know, that will then spill over from his own district to his own constituency and the word will be out that this is a good man, that he is doing a good job.

Another thing that would help enormously would be if we had the same kind of situation here as is the case in the U.K. I was quite taken by the idea that there are literally hundreds of members of the House of Commons in the United Kingdom who have no interest whatsoever in ever being anything else but a backbencher. To them that is what they got into politics for, that is what they like doin, they were not the slightest bit interested in a call from number 10 Downing Street, or whatever the case might be, and there there is a certain maturity on the part of the public which clearly understands that.

I was at dozens of different functions, for instance, where the backbencher or the member of Parliament was much more highly regarded and much more attention was paid to him by the people around him than to the minister who was with him at the time, so that I think if those entering politics enter with the idea that being a backbencher and a good one is a very satisfying, a rewarding and a complete experience, then if some other things happen, okay. But there will not always be this wondering in the middle of the night, 'Is this the night I get the phone call from the Premier, or what the hell is going to happen?'.

It also, by the way, entrenches the independence of the backbencher, whether he is on the government side or otherwise, and I think that is terribly important. The most refreshing thing over my tenure in the United Kingdom was to see 115 so-called 'Wets' in the Conservative Party signing their own manifesto and telling their Prime Minister that they did not like what she was doing, and they could do that because they did not care.

So I think the fundamental point is to make sure when you enter politics that if you do not make it beyond the backbenches you have not squandered your time, you have not wasted a big chunk out of your life.

MR. SIMMONS:

Don, the salary issue: I think you know the dilemma the Committee is ultimately going to face. If I felt members had adequate accommodations or adequate salaries I would not be serving on this Committee, I would not have been one of the ones who agitated to get such a Committee set up, nor would my colleagues, I am sure. The dilemma we are going to face, of course, is a combination of what is a fair salary, which you addressed quite adequately, and the second part of the dilemma is how do you - I guess the marketing term is 'package it' - present it to the public in an acceptable way? I can hear the rhetoric now.

The salary now is $23,000, or if you want to add the other $11,000 which I am supposed to be spending for expenses - one member insisted yesterday it was salary, but if you take $34,000, or $23,000, or whatever, and you go to your level of the ADM - what is an ADM?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
In the 50's.

MR. SIMMONS:
So if you double the basic stipend, you can hear the pontificators out there now, especially those pontificators who will pontificate and take the salary themselves in the process, and I have some people in mind.

You will hear about restraint, you will hear all the other arguments, it is more than they are getting in the Yukon, or PEI, or Ontario and all that kind of situation, so my question is, if all you say about the salary issue is as legitimate as I believe it to be, how do you, in 1985, go out and say, 'Newfoundland public, your politicians are going to bump themselves up from $23,000 to $50,000?'. Can you do that, and, if so, how do you do it?

MR. JAMIESON:
Well, first of all, you are going to obviously run into a certain amount of flack and opposition. The other thing I think that needs to be done is to make it absolutely clear that the so-called fringe benefits are not benefits for the member, that if he is doing his job right, if he gets $11,000 or $12,000, or whatever the figure is, for constituency expenses or for travel or for whatever, then he should be spending it. One of the problems now, of course, is, as you will know, that in some cases that is not being done and consequently you have this impression abroad that the member is making a lot more than the $26,000, or whatever you mentioned. I think you have to make it clear in people's minds so that you do not get these news stories or you do not get speeches being made saying, 'Here is what the member gets and in addition to that he gets this and this and this' and then there is a figure down on the bottom which it is assumed he pockets. That does not happen, as you know.

I made an interesting experiment. For one year I operated everything having to do with my constituency out of a single bank account, everything, and at the end of the year I put $22,000 into it.

MR. SIMMONS:
Here at the provincial level?

MR. JAMIESON:
No, this was in Ottawa. What I said was how can I figure out how much it costs me in relation to what I am getting to be a member of Parliament in Ottawa, and I was $22,000 in the hole. I kept it separate, in one account. People do not realize either, without stretching this answer too long, how many donations you have to make, how many contributions you have to make, how many things you have to do that you would not normally be expected to do. So I think one of the ways to get at what you are talking about is to make it clear and to separate out what is retained by the member for his own use, what he has to live on in other words, and not this amorphous kind of vague package where he might or might not be able to retain some of it. The truth of the matter is, to do your job you get $26,000 a year, or whatever it is, and the rest of it is given to you by way of expenses, and if you are doing the job right you will not hold on to many of those expenses.

MR. SIMMONS:
The figure is actually $23,000, not even $26,000. Don, to put

yourself in our situation for a moment as a committee, assuming we recommend an increase in remuneration, ought we to be taking the bite-the-bullet approach and saying, here is what an MHA is worth and therefore we recommend this be done now or April 1, 1986, or ought we to recommend some phase-in approach, over the next three or four years?

MR. JAMIESON:
Well, I would not advocate a phased in approach. I might on, perhaps, some pension plan or something of that sort. I understand that Mr. Carter was here yesterday and said that this was not a propitious time. Let me tell you, from twenty-odd years experience, there is never a propitious time. If you are not fighting a recession you are fighting inflation, if you are not fighting a wage freeze you are fighting something else, so that there will never be a time when you will not have to, to use your expression, bite the bullet. But, having said that, I wonder, sometimes, if the public is really quite as critical as is generally assumed, or if politicians are not a bit chicken livered when it comes to this? If you had made the decision, or whoever does make the decision said this is it and we are going to do it, there might be a bit of hue and cry but I doubt very much if the public would get all that incensed. I am sure you will find people who will say, because there is a wage freeze on, that this is not the time to do it, but, after all, all manner of different people in different categories who get paid by taxpayer money are getting all manner of changes in their remuneration and the like and why should a particular group being paid by the public, namely the politicians, be subject to constraints which are never ending? In other words, if there is a wage freeze it will end at some stage, if there is inflation it will hopefully end at some stage, but there will always be something, I repeat, which will not make it palatable for a politician to act.

MR. SIMMONS:
My final question, Mr. Chairman, at least for this round, relates to the very process itself. I have my own clear views on the subjects that form the mandate of this committee, and I do not mind giving the House the benefit of my thinking on it in terms of salary, accommodations, so on and so forth. I find a certain problem, though, a certain conflict of interest problem almost, a vested interest problem in my, and my colleagues, having to make a determination on those issues because we are to be the recipients, in some fashion, of any recommendations that might flow from this exercise. Do you have any views to offer the committee on the subject of whether this is a proper assignment for a committee of MHAs, or ought it to be done, say, as it is in Ottawa, under statute, where a commission is triggered after each election, a commission which does not include any sitting members of the House?

MR. JAMIESON:
Well, if you are going to take the view that there is a conflict of interest, then that argument spills over into practically everything that a member of the House of Assembly does. In other words, when you approve of expenditures of money, in some way or other, directly or indirectly, presumably you either benefit or

lose from it. Now, why should one particular segment of public expenditure be isolated from that? I might be agreeable to the statutory committee and so on, if I thought that it would work any better. But here in Newfoundland, for instance, we had Mr. Pynn and Company, and I think they did a reasonably competent job, and we have had all sorts of other techniques tried, and I do not see that any of them is any better than the members making their own recommendations. Now, if they can do it with the support and the backing of others from outside fine, but if you leave it to a statutory group, it seems to me, also, that you are going to develop, over time, a certain resentment on the part of members. In other words, how pure are the statutory committees in terms of their considerations, any more than the members of the House itself are? And, after all, in the end it is going to be up to the government to decide, is it not? I know of no other technique other than to make a recommendation to government and government has to decide. So the decision in the end is a political decision. Whether you have it at arm's length or not I do not think it makes any difference. I think if it is done right it does not matter who does it. It is credibility that is needed.

MR. SIMMONS:
Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Are there any other questions?

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Fenwick.

MR. FENWICK:
I would like to thank you for coming here. You started by talking about the problem of recruiting candidates for elections. I have gone through two general elections as leader of a party. You thought you had a problem when you had maybe ten or a dozen sitting members, how would you have liked having no sitting members and having to look for all fifty-two? I am particularly sensitive to that aspect of it, and the reaction you get from people whom you are trying to recruit.

I would like to concentrate on that part of it because it has been suggested, I think yesterday or in our previous session in Corner Brook, that maybe what is necessary is some sort of legislation which would protect the jobs of individuals who are considering a political career, that maybe we should be looking at some sort of statute which says that if you leave a job as a teacher, or as a businessman working for a large corporation and so on, that there be a period of time, a window, during which you can return to that job at the same level at which you left it and that it be guaranteed by law. What I want to know is what you think of that suggestion as a means of attacking the problem?

MR. JAMIESON:
It certainly has merit. It does not solve the problem totally for the reason that I believe I alluded to before, namely, that you are out of the mainstream. Let me give you a case in point: Executive assistants and people who go to work for ministers on what is known as exempt staff are entitled to go back into or enter the public service if their

minister is out. What frequently happens is that that is hemmed in by so many qualifiers it is very difficult for the fellow to pick up where he left off. It would certainly help considerably in some professions and in some lines of work. If a person is working for wages, obviously he could come back in at the spot where he was or even with, perhaps, some increments. It is the self-employed, too, who are increasingly the people to whom parties are looking for members.

MR. FENWICK:
Other parties are looking.

MR. JAMIESON:
Pardon?

MR. FENWICK:
We do not tend to draw too many self-employed businessmen.

MR. JAMIESON:
No, but you do draw a lot of teachers. Well, they are not necessarily self-employed but I think you know the kind of person I mean. I am not speaking of the entrepreneur so much here. But, in any event, that can happen. This would be a useful, I think, sort of backstop, but it will not solve the problem entirely.

MR. FENWICK:
Okay. There are only one or two others. The general question of the role of a backbencher is one that I find quite interesting. I found, as you did, that McGrath's report brought a refreshing look at the backbencher's role. What was quite curious about it, or quite interesting, was that a lot of the role was already there in bits and pieces, it was a matter of saying, 'Well, look, you have been allowing less party discipline over a period of time and so on'. I think that that is a worthwhile approach to take. I think that too much party discipline is probably worse than none at all, in the sense that you cannot get anything out. But that was just an observation on it.

The last comment I had was when you talked about increasing benefits, increasing salaries, you said there must be a stronger system of commitment to the job. Do you mean by that that you feel that anyone elected as an MHA should not have any other job that they do at the same time? In other words, you are really saying that there should not any longer be any part-time members? That is what you are saying, is it not?

MR. JAMIESON:
Well, I suppose I am saying that, but with an awareness that it is almost impossible to achieve absolute symmetry in that. For instance, again let us take somebody like a farmer or a fisherman who are probably going to do a certain amount of work, or a lawyer might do a certain amount of work. What I am saying is that predominantly, which is perhaps a better word, the person should be there as the member of the House of Assembly, that it should not just be a sideline. We can all think of people who showed the flag once in a blue moon in terms of their political activities, but were carrying on in other ways just as if they had not been elected. So when you go into the House of Assembly, in other words, you are prepared to give it if not your all then most of it.

As I say, there are bound to be distinctions and separations. Take the odd case of somebody who is living on investments and so on, they are not going to put those all in escrow while they are in the House, they are going to be doing a certain amount on that. You will never achieve absolute parity between all the members, but you can eliminate this business of a person saying, well, I do not really care. That, I think, is what rubs the public the wrong way, as well.

MR. FENWICK:
You mentioned the question of accountability and the difficulty of accounting for our every single expenditure, every cup of coffee and so on. One of the areas that we have been discussing now is the twelve trips per year which are allowed back and forth to districts. The suggestion has been made, based on evidence in other provinces, that that is woefully inadequate. The House of Commons, as you know, has fifty-two trips and, I think, a bunch of them to go anywhere in Canada, actually. You are not referring to unaccountability in that area, are you?

MR. JAMIESON:
I am to a certain degree. In other words, I would rather have, let us say, the unlimited trips, and accountability that you made the trips, but not necessarily putting in chits for everything that you bought on that particular trip. Because, as I said, that is open to far more abuse than if you put in a per diem kind of arrangement. I would be in favour not only of unlimited travel - now you may have to put some upper limit, I do not know what it would be - but I would also be in favour of having members entitled to some kind of expenses when they travel to other parts of the Province as well as their own districts. I think that there is a great need for members, generally, to have an awareness of what is going on all over the Province. I am not just dealing as an ombudsman with their own particular constituency, that is their principal responsibility, but they should be able to have a general feel for things.

So, to me, in this day and age, travel is such an integral part of being in public life that there should be no restrictions on it at all, as far as I can see, because there are normal restrictions anyway.

MR. SIMMONS:
Anybody else have a question?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
There are no other questions, are there? I think you fellows have covered the waterfront. I just want to take the opportunity on behalf of my colleagues, Mr. Jamieson, to thank you for coming in for what we certainly knew would be an interesting presentation.

MR. SIMMONS:
I was just wondering, Don, if by way of closing you had anything else you wanted to add.

MR. JAMIESON:
We did not get into the question of election expenses. That is something else, again. I think that MP or MHAs could be helped to some extent, as indeed is now happening nationally.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
In thanking you for coming and making your presentation I just wanted to say to you that, as I said at the outset, the terms of reference are such that they are broad and we have interpreted them that way. The time constraints that are on us to report ten days after the House resumes sitting,

which would put it at approximately November 1st. or 2nd., will preclude us, it seems to me, dealing effectively and totally with some of the areas that you have talked about and that we have concerns about. So it would be my hope that the Committee would make some recommendation highlighting some of the areas which require more pursuit and investigation and that either the Committee be extended for a few months to complete that work or that some other vehicle be found to deal with it.

I just want to say that we share some of the concerns that you have expressed in terms of the larger issues, the role of the Legislature, the role of its members, perception and those matters which are far away yet very much a part of the whole issue of accommodations and benefits. So in that context let me thank you for taking the time out and coming along. Thank you very much.

MR. JAMIESON:
Thank you very much.

MR. SIMMONS:
Thank you, Don.

Mr. Chairman, might we have a little break before the next witness.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Okay. We will stretch our legs. We have two more.

Recess

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Order!

There has been a change in the agenda. Mr. Wayne Russell from the NTA was to appear at three o'clock this afternoon and that has been changed to two o'clock. Mr. Collins is our next witness. Mr. Collins is a former member of the House of Assembly.

Before you start, Mr. Collins, I want to take the opportunity on behalf of my colleagues to welcome to the Chamber a former member of the House in the person of Mr. Wornell. We are glad to see you, Sir. We are sure you have something to tell us, as well, as soon as Mr. Collins is finished. Let me say to both of you that I am sorry that it has dragged out a bit, we were a little late starting, I guess.

Mr. Collins, you are familiar with the motion and the committe, so I am not going to waste any time going into any detail. You are on, Sir.

MR. COLLINS:
Thank you. My name is Randy Collins. I represented the district of Port de Grave for six years. Probably a lot of reporters and newspaper people did not even know who I was because I was not a publicity hound, I just worked and worked and worked, seventeen or eighteen hours a day trying to get everything done that I could. I come here with no axe to grind. I made a lot more money before I entered politics, a lot more money while I was in politics, and a lot more since I am out of politics, so the compensation I received during the six years I was a member was really incidental. As a matter of fact, I would go so far as to say it was a joke.

I watched TV yesterday and I take issue with the comments of Mr.

Warren and Mr. John Carter. Like the speaker before me, Mr. Jamieson, I think there should be absolutely no restrictions with regard to travel. Mr. Fenwick should be able to go back and forth to his district in Labrador whenever he wants to. He is elected to represent the people and he should have that opportunity, and if that means a pass on EPA, sobeit. The man should not be denied his family, his kids, his friends, his district and the people he represents because of travel costs. The federal people, I think, are granted fifty-two passes a year to get back and forth to Ottawa. In some cases they can use ten and take their families, and they can take staff members at different times. The travel regulations there are quite adequate. And with regard to that, I found that it would have been very beneficial to me as a provincial member if I had been given four or five trips to Ottawa, I could have used them to benefit the district. This is one thing that has never been brought up. Provincial MHAs, on occasion, should have the right and the opportunity to go to Ottawa, particularly now. With the situation in Placentia Bay, I am sure if Mr. Patterson were given the opportunity he would be gone to have a meeting with the federal minister. But, I mean, the expense is just too much for him. He should be given four or five trips a year to go to Ottawa on important issues. Every provincial MHA should be given that.

MR. CHAIRMAN

I see.

MR. SIMMONS:

That is a classic example.

MR. COLLINS:

The same thing applies to the emergency in the fishery. It is almost a ridiculous situation. I mean, you have a federal MP there representing you but that man cannot do everything. John Crosbie cannot do everything, and if Bill Patterson could go himself, I am sure he could raise just as much noise as John Crosbie could.

MR. SIMMONS:

There is no doubt about that.

MR. FENWICK:

Probably more.

MR. COLLINS:

In reference to Mr. Carter, with all due respect to John, and we used to have arguments over this when I was in the House of Assembly, the difference in representing a district in St. John's and an outport district is like black and white. There is absolutely no comparison whatsoever. I tried to encourage John, in the six years that I was in the House, to come out and stay with me one weekend. I used to average thirty-five to forty calls and visits per day. John Carter might get one or two a month. He has no concept whatsoever of what it is to be a member in an outport. I mean, it just about drives you crazy. I spent six years at it. I got some pleasure out of helping some people, I must say; you do ninety-nine things and no one thanks you, but you do the one hundredth thing and they thank you so you stay at it for awhile. Generally, it is almost a thankless position.

In Newfoundland politics is such that you almost downgrade yourself by getting involved in it, because politicians are considered, I think, to be court jesters and low animals on the totem pole of society here.

I read an article the other day where they rated the different professions in the world, they gave doctors, lawyers, ministers, clergymen, farmers and so on, right on down the ladder, and on a scale of forty, I think the politician was rated second or third from the bottom of the ladder. Here we are giving respect to a judge, to a doctor, to a teacher, yet every move and every law and every regulation those people have to live by are made by politicians, are made by people who supposedly the public do not respect. Now, that to me is a ludicrous situation. A politician should be rated at the top of the ladder. His credibility, his honesty should be second to none. We pay a politician $22,000 a year, which is an absolute joke. You have secretaries who makes more than that. You have executive assistants who make twice as much. When you talk of directors and assistant deputy ministers, they are so far above the politician on the salary scale that they are in another world. So how do you sit down and talk to people when everyone around you is making more, sometimes double and triple your salary?

In my particular case I am probably financially secure, but I wanted to try to do something for Newfoundland, the province that has done well by me. I wanted to get elected just to help the district and help the people in the area to get things they have always wanted. To my mind, that area was always neglected. Well, the first thing I had to do was hire a pharmacist to handle my shift - I had not worked a shift in the drugstore since 1979 - and pay that girl $25,000 to $28,000 a year, while I was going to make $22,000. People always said to me, Randy, why are you at that? Well, I just felt I wanted to be at it. I wanted to help people. And there are people in the House of Assembly now who are in the same position I was in and they are dedicated Newfoundlanders, but, by the same token, there are also people in there who are not worth the $22,000 they are getting.

But it all comes right back to the general public. Last night I read the submission Gar Pynn made in 1980. One person in all of Newfoundland appeared before the Committee on MHAs' remuneration in 1980 and, according to the news, there is nobody this time. So if you people do not have enough self-respect and pride to pay yourselves what you think you are worth and give yourselves a half chance to make a decent living out of it, I mean, the public is not there to help you. If you go ahead and do this, I think they will respect you for it in the long run.

I have some notes here which I think will all come together in the end and you will understand what I am trying to say. To attract good people to politics in Newfoundland, the first thing you are going to have to do is pay a reasonable salary, there is no doubt about that. Unlike other provinces, we have no General Motors, we have no major employers of 4,000, 5,000 or 6,000 people. Most of the money in Newfoundland comes from the three levels of government, provincial, federal and municipal, and we have to have good, credible people there. Politics in Newfoundland affects every phase of our daily living. Politics is involved somewhere in every cent that is spent.

When I was elected, in 1979, I went into St. John's and they gave me a little office - it was not an office, it was a closet - in which there was an empty filing cabinet. I expected to walk in there and see the files on the district of Port de Grave, maps, figures, everything that had been done for that district since 1949. I found nothing. Absolutely nothing. Not even a pen in the desk. I was so disillusioned, that after three months I was just about ready to throw it up. But something happened - I helped somebody - and I stayed on and I stayed on. I think after you have been there awhile you feel a duty to the people who put you there and you have to stay, you just cannot quit.

Again, with regard to remuneration, how can you be expected to represent 12,000 people, with every kind of problem under the sun, while working out of a brief case? You come home and you are looking for notes, you are looking for papers, you are looking for reference books. You have people knocking on your door. It gets to the stage where you close your drapes and you tie your gate to try to keep people away. You are in St. John's all day long going all over the place looking for different departments and ministers and deputy ministers and directors and everything else, you come home and you have to have another four or five hours of it in the nighttime. And it is the same thing on Saturdays and on Sundays. I mean, it is asking an awful lot of a man, to give up his family and his home and everything else for $22,000 a year. It is asking too much.

In Newfoundland, if you look back at the calibre of the politician and the blunders that have been made since 1949, it all goes back to the person we have had there, he was just not capable of making the right decisions, or did not care, or was not honest enough, or was not sincere enough.

Here, in this Province of a half million people, we get something like $600 million or $700 million or $800 million a year in transfer payments. We have two of the largest iron ore plants in the world, two of the largest pulp and paper mills, minerals we have not discovered, freshwater, tourism, which has not even been tapped, we are smack in the middle of the best fishing grounds on the face of the earth, we have gas and oil off our shore in abundance and we cannot manage, while Japan is over there with nothing, with a population of 100 million people, and it is one of the most prosperous countries in the world. I mean, we are doing something wrong in Newfoudland and it goes right back to the political issue, it goes right back to the people we put into the House of Assembly. They are not there for the right reasons. I suppose we are not attracting the right people because we are not putting in the right money.

As far as having help in the district is concerned, it is fine to have an office in St. John's and everything else, but most of the people who want to see you are in your district. In St. John's you have Confederation Building they can go to, you have the university they can go to, you have the trade school they can go to. But every single man who goes looking for a job in the district of Port de Grave goes down to Manpower in Harbour Grace then leaves that and comes to me, or he goes to the Social Services Office there and he leaves that and comes to me. I mean, it just got so hectic and incredible, and in a way I am almost ashamed to say this, I am almost glad I lost last time.

I mean, the pressure was just unbelievable, and the rewards were such that it just made no sense to go back to it for another four years. And I think a lot of people feel the same way.

And the public and the press always take a negative attitude toward a politician. Everything is government's fault. It is governments this, government's that. Well, we put them there. We elected them. We had a choice.

At nominations you will have seven or eight good people, but the person chosen to be the candidate is a person who has been a failure in business and in the work force. The man has been a failure all his life, yet he is expected to succeed in the House of Assembly, if he is elected. It would seem that a person's character or ability is never taken into consideration, so that it comes right back to the public. You have to elect good people. But you cannot put the cart before the horse either, you have to pay good salaries to attract good people.

I look back at history and I read about how Ted Russell, Dr. Pottle, Harold Horwood and young Fred Rowe got out. These were good people, members who really should have stayed, because they had a lot to offer Newfoundland. But they could not stay. There was no way they could do it. Look at the number of people in there now who are merely existing. If a guy gets elected and says he is going to be a full-time member and he is going to live on the salary he will be paid, he is lying or he is crazy. You cannot do it.

As Don said a minute ago, you have a lot of expenses over the run of a year. All these flags and pins and wreaths, these have to be bought. Government do not give you these things. People are of the opinion that everything comes easy. They are wrong. Everything has to be paid for.

Again, the decision as to what you are going to get is, as Don said, going to be a political decision. Everything goes right back to the politician, the cabinet minister, the Executive Council, and the final decision is going to be a political one. I remember going through it in 1979. If I had known what I know now, I would have kicked up quite a stink when they said $19,000 a year. I mean, it is just crazy.

My philosophy is go after what you think the position is worth. Do not, like Garfield Warren says, take twelve trips this year and then go after another twelve next year, go after what it is worth right now. There should be no restrictions. As an MHA now you really could not consider a salary of less than $50,000 a year, plus your travel expenses. It would be out of the question. You could not live on less than that. Make it a position of responsibility. Make it a position that people are going to take pride in and go after, a position they will want to hold on to. With all the headaches and heartaches that go with it, why would anybody fight tooth and nail to hold on to a position that is going to pay you $22,000 a year? It is a ridiculous situation.

I am surprised that some people have held on as long as they have. I guess the only reason they have stayed on is they have a second income, a second job. They have to have it. Don mentioned what it cost him. If I were to quote to you what it cost me to be in politics for six years, you would not believe it. It is a ridiculous figure.

It is fine to provide a secretary and office space in St. John's, you need that too, there is no doubt about it. But a person has to be able to knock on the door of a member's district office and be handed out a form for the provincial grants we have, or be handed out an application for trades school, or be handed out an application for the parks. I had to do that continuously, day after day after day, and because of that, my time was taken up in things which were incidental, silly little things, when I should have been in fighting for a million dollars for water and sewer, which I did and I got, by the way, but only because I worked so hard, I had to stay in the district and do all these little things. These menial tasks should be done by an - I should not use the word 'menial', I suppose - employee, by a staff member, not by the member. You have too many other things you have to do. Your whole time should be taken up with ministers and deputy ministers and directors, trying to get financing and funding and things for your district. You should not have to do those things.

You mentioned that you are planning on taking some trips to look at other areas, what they are getting and everything. I do not know if you are familiar with the book - probably a lot of you are - **Canadian Legislatures, 1984, Comparison**. Everything you want to know is in that, every fact, figure, salary and everything else. That was put out in 1984.

I do not know if I am getting my point across, that politics in Newfoundland have to change. We have to get a high caliber of individual interested, dedicated persons, totally sincere and honest. We have to get them. As I said, put the salary up to $50,000, or whatever you decide. There are people in there now who are not worth that, but when the time comes the Newfoundland people will decide whether they are good or not and they will throw them out and put somebody else in. But for goodness sake, make the position respectable, what it should be. I mean, in Newfoundland a politician is looked down on, right away he is a crook.

I remember when I was first elected I was in the drugstore and this guy walked in - he delivers the newspapers - a very good friend of mine whom I paid once a month for the papers - he put in the bill and I wrote out a cheque for it. He stood at the counter smiling at me - there were people around - and I said, 'What are you waiting for, Fred?'. He said, 'I am waiting for my cheque.' I said, 'I will give you your cheque at the end of the month.' 'No, Sir', he said, 'you are in politics now, I am not trusting you any more' - you know, just joking. But that is the attitude of most people, if you are a politician you are a crook, you are in there because there is something in it for you. This is the idea most people have and politicians are to blame for a lot of it, because it has been going on down through the years. But it should not be going on. It has to be cleaned up. And it is not going to be cleaned up over the short term, it will take probably ten, fifteen or twenty years, but the place to start is here and now.

Do not make the wrong decision, as we did in 1980, and put the salaries up 10 per cent or 15 per cent. That is absolutely crazy. If you are going to go for it, go for what the position is worth and stand by your decision. You will probably get a lot of flack for it, but stand by it and in the long run it will be borne out that you were right. I do not know if there are any questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much, Mr. Collins. I will just make one quick observation before I open it up to questions. In expressing my appreciation to you for coming along, I will just say that a lot of what you have said, I think, can be summed up in what we are hearing and from my experience over the years. I think Mr. Jamieson put his finger on it when he said that very often or in many instances it is a case of chicken livered. That is the first time I have heard that term applied to it, but as I thought about it I think it is probably appropriate.

Let us face it, who has been in charge of the system? It has not been the electorate, it has been the politicians. Who has been in charge to create the perception of politics in this Province? It is not the public, it is the politician. I will just conclude by saying to you that this is why his term strikes a chord with me. Many of the things you have said I can relate to. If the issue is going to be cleaned up, so to speak, if changes are going to be made, if, in fact, people from all target groups in the Province are to be attracted to the House of Assembly, to run for office, there is only one group of people who will do it, not the electorate but the elected people, the government, the House of Assembly. On that note I will pass on to questions.

No questions?

MR. LUSH:
I have none, he covered the whole bulk.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much, Mr. Collins, for coming by.

Mr. Wornell, do you want to say a few words to us? Come and take your seat.

MR. WORNELL:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
I welcome you. I do not have to say anything, you have heard enough to know what we are all about this morning so you carry on.

MR. WORNELL:
I wish to thank you for the opportunity to make a few comments. I think we are honoured today to have heard Don Jamieson, who, I think, is the most successful politician Newfoundland has ever had. I listened very attentively, but I was sorry that sitting in the rear I did not hear everything he said. I agreed with just about everything he had to

say except one thing and that is, if a politician, a member or a minister, is allowed a certain travel expense there should be some record of travel at least, if not detailed expenses. So I did not agree with Don's idea of a blanket expense account, or what you call travel expense.

Getting back to the basics, Mr. Collins, who, perhaps, is an unsuccessful politician, as I perhaps am, he served for one term, I think. Is that right Mr. Collins?

MR. COLLINS:
Two terms.

MR. WORNELL:
You had two, did you? Well, you are not quite as unsuccessful as I am. I had one term. I thought politics was, perhaps, a false glory. In other words, you go into politics with the idea of trying to do something for a district and you soon find that you are a slave to the constituents' demands. They expect just too much of another human being, especially a backbencher.

Now, I was a backbencher for five years and I agreed with almost every complaint I heard from my district - I say my district, the district I represented - and when I would take these complaints, expectations, and hopes to the powers that be, I was faced with a blank wall of indifference. That was all I could call it, indifference. In other words, the government, the Cabinet, made their decisions and, in a good many cases, made their decisions without any consultation with the members, that is the backbenchers.

In deference to Premier Smallwood, he did listen to all the complaints and all the representations I as the representative made on behalf of my district, but there were certain things already cut and dried by Cabinet decision, or what you might call Orders in Council, that just could not be changed, altered, countermanded, or otherwise changed. So my experience was one of frustration, terrible frustration. I was satisfied to do my stint of service to the district. The sessional pay was $6500 a year with no travelling expenses. If I made four trips a year to the district, which covered 130 miles of coastline, that was certainly not quarter of the visits the people expected. If you saw, say, the town councils, or the community councils, or the merchants and did not see the last person out on the point, well, then, you were not doing your job. Now, I just cite this to show the Committee what the expectations of your constituents are. If you do not suffer from the same frustrations, well, then, you have it made.

Now before I came here I jotted down a few notes and these things I look upon as basic facts. MHAs are servants of their constituents. I do not think anybody can gainsay that. They are paid from general revenue. General revenue comes from the taxes of the middle and upper classes, not so much from the poor people, but the poor people have to be served by the members. Regardless of members' service or usefulness, they are remunerated equally. Work loads vary with the districts. Some districts are extremely difficult to represent. Others, as I said before, are just sinecures, especially those on the

Avalon Peninsula, with the exception of Mr. Collins'.

The Avalon Peninsula does take in your former district, Mr. Collins?

MR. COLLINS:
Yes.

MR. WORNELL:
I would not think you had quite so many complaints as you said you had, but I will believe you. MHAs perhaps offer themselves for services to a district not knowing exactly the responsibilities they are facing. The motto of a serious politician, a sincere politician should be service before self. But he cannot always give service when other people deny him the co-operation he deserves.

Politicians should not expect to be looked upon as honourable. We are all miserable sinners, all human beings, and if all of us looked in our own hearts we could probably see lots of faults. So the public image of the politician, though correct perhaps, is not charitable, because if we saw what another person had to contend with we would probably be more charitable.

Any man, in any walk of life, who renders service to a community is worthy of recognition and should be duly honoured, whether he is called an honourable member or not. So let us be honest and fair. Politics is a rough and tumble game of roulette; some win, some lose, and the losers are not often pitied. There may be social prestige, but that is more than balanced by the entailed responsibility.

I have already said that some constituents expect too much of their elected representatives. The chores are endless: checking up on welfare cases, unemployment insurance, getting employment, water and sewer facilities, etc., and these have been outlined very well, I think, by the former speaker.

I know I have vivid memories of the various demands that I had in my district and the frustrations I suffered. I have already mentioned that. To give you an example, one Sunday evening I sat down to supper around six o'clock and the telephone rang. A bunch of loggers in Hermitage had been waiting for the coastal boat for about four hours - just imagine, on a wharf for four hours - so one fellow rang me and he said, "In the name of God, see what is going on with the coastal boat." Now, remember this was Sunday, all offices closed down. Eight o'clock I got back to my supper after having made about twenty phone calls, eventually locating the man in charge of the coastal boats. I have forgotten his name now.

MR. SIMMONS:
How long ago?

MR. WORNELL:
Oh, that was twenty years ago. No, not twenty years ago, eighteen years ago.

MR. SIMMONS:
It was not Gordon Saunders?

MR. WORNELL:
Anyway, his name does not matter. I found him out in the country, at his country place, and he promised that he would get hold of somebody who could probably find out where the coastal boat was. Eventually he rang back. He said, 'Boy, the coastal boat had to go back from

Harbour Breton to Grand Bank somewhere with a patient and she is delayed for so many hours'. I said, 'Where is she now?'. 'Oh, on her way to Hermitage'. So I rang back and told the fellow, and at eight o'clock I got back to my supper. Now that will give you an idea. A politician just does not work eight hours a day, from nine to five, he is on call all hours of the day and night. I have had calls after midnight. It is a thankless night and day job. However, I suppose it has it compensations.

Now, you people are mainly interested, I think, in salaries, office conditions, and what else?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The total package of functioning as a member.

MR. WORNELL:
As far as the salary is concerned, one could look upon $22,000 basic as an adequate salary for a man and his wife, but is it fair for an MHA? I do not think it is. I agree with Don Jamieson, I agree with Mr. Collins, and I think some consideration should be given to setting a basic salary which would probably raise the dignity of the backbencher especially. If travel expenses are incurred, then I think that there should be a certain amount of - what should I say? - record of the expenses. Travel to areas of Newfoundland other than his district might be considered as an extra, not for frivolous reasons, not for taking a plane, say, to Eagle Lake to salmon fish. But for legitimate reasons I think that an MHA should have access to any part of Canada, for that matter, when he can make the case that that trip could result in a benefit to his district.

There are other points but they have been covered. As for accommodations, I do not think much has been said about that. I believe, from what I see, that these are inadequate, woefully inadequate. I think that situation should be rectified as soon as possible. I believe there should be good accommodations for each member. Whether there be a special room for conferences or not I do not know. But it should be done as inexpensively as possible, you know, to arrange accommodations for a member to have privacy when he is being visited by any of his constituents.

With these few thoughts, gentlemen, I think that is about it. I wish you all the success in the world in your deliberations.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much, Mr. Wornell. Any questions?

MR. FENWICK:
I only have one question with two parts: Before you went into politics, what was your occupation?

MR. WORNELL:
Immediately before I went into politics, Sir, I was self-employed. I had been in business previous to that.

MR. FENWICK:
And after politics?

MR. WORNELL:
After politics I went back to my agency business. In other words, I would not have gotten into politics had I remained a member of a firm. I had been on the staff of the United Nail and Foundry.

MR. FENWICK:
It was only because you were

independent at the time.

MR. WORNELL:
A year or so before I got into politics I started my own agency business and, therefore, I had a leg to stand on and a leg to fall back on when I retired from politics. I must say that I could not operate the business and be a member of the Legislature as well, because at that time we used to have sittings in the morning and sittings in the evening, up until about midnight sometimes. One time it went to two o'clock in the morning. So you could not do much business when the House was in session. Then you had to have your regular trips to the district. If I wished to reveal a secret, I could say that my business suffered 60 per cent. When I got back into it I had to rebuild from the ground up. No pensions. I had contributed to a pension plan and I had something like $2,700 into that pension plan. When it was decided that I would not be going back into politics, I had that transferred to a trust company, in my name. They did not even give me 3 per cent on that money. So, one might say that I left politics worse off than when I went in.

MR. SIMMONS:
You had your premiums transferred, you mean?

MR. WORNELL:
Yes. Well, they were all lump sums.

MR. SIMMONS:
During what period were you the member for Hermitage? What dates?

MR. WORNELL:
Oh, 1966 to 1971.

MR. SIMMONS:
You had one election, five years, so you were not entitled to a pension.

MR. WORNELL:
No, because pensions then, I think, were given to people who had nine years or three terms.

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes, okay.

MR. WORNELL:
But after Mr. Moores took over, I think it is now -

MR. FENWICK:
Five years or two elections.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Five years, two elections.

MR. WORNELL:
Oh, two elections or five years.

MR. SIMMONS:
Not or, and.

MR. FENWICK:
And five years.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Five years and two elections and, of course, you have to meet the age requirement. It is not like the House of Commons.

MR. WORNELL:
In other words, you are assured of a pension now after five years, providing you have had two elections.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
At age sixty.

MR. SIMMONS:
But when you say a pension, what is the percentage?

MR. FENWICK:
Five per cent.

MR. SIMMONS:
After five years you will get 5 per cent of salary and then it graduates.

MR. WORNELL:
Oh, I see. It graduates.

MR. LUSH:
Five per cent per year.

MR. SIMMONS:
Five per cent for each year. Yes, you get 25 per cent, 5 per cent for each year.

MR. WORNELL:
So you get 25 per cent after 5 years?

MR. SIMMONS
That is right.

MR. WORNELL:
That is worth knowing.

MR. FENWICK:
That is of the $23,000.

MR. SIMMONS:
Abe, that is of the $23,000.

MR. FENWICK:
Your pension would be something between $5,000 and $6,000 a year if you served five years and two elections. That would be the minimum pension. You can only get it when you combination of age plus service equals sixty.

MR. WORNELL:
Well, now, if one say were fifty when he left, could he get a pension?

MR. FENWICK:
No, not necessarily.

MR. LUSH:
Not after five years. With ten years he could. Your chronological age plus your years of service must equal sixty.

MR. WORNELL:
I do not think it is retroactive though.

MR. FENWICK:
Why do you not check?

MR. WORNELL:
What is the point?

MR. SIMMONS:
My point is to reinforce that after five years in politics you are not even eligible for a pension however small. That is my reason for raising the question.

MR. WORNELL:
No, of course not. No.

Don Jamieson mentioned something about that, you know, and he thought there should be some sort of an honorarium given to members to help them get back into the groove again. And I agree with everything Don said there. I think that is right.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Just a little bit of information for you: You and I started at the same time, in the '66 election.

MR. WORNELL:
Did we?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
You were pretty close when you said the sessional indemnity was $6,500. Actually you were out $100. The sessional indemnity was $6,600. I have good reason to remember it, because I took a $3,400 cut in salary.

MR. WORNELL:
Is that so?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
It was $6,600 in 1966. And that

term was an unusual one because it ran a full five years whereas most do not, it is three, three and a half, or four years.

MR. WORNELL:
Well, it went from $6,600 to $8,500 to $10,000. The last year I was there it was $10,000, with no travel allowance. I remember going to Grand Falls and Corner Brook on various things, you know, and paid it out of my own pocket.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The sessional indemnity went from $6,600 to $10,000 during your term.

MR. WORNELL:
During my term, yes.

MR. SIMMONS:
You know, Mr. Chairman, this is a hearing rather than a meeting but I would like to say through the Chair to the research officer, Mr. Dooling, that that, too, might be a point of comparison. The basic indemnity of the MHA has gone from $10,000 to $23,000 in fourteen years. I wonder what has been happening in other professions? Tom, do you recall the comparable figures in education at that time?

MR. LUSH:
When I left teaching to go into politics, in '75, I think my salary was $22,000. When I left after going back for my little stint, it was close to $40,000.

MR. SIMMONS:
An interesting exercise, Doug.

Mr. Chairman, I am sorry I had to step out for a minute to say good bye to Mr. Jamieson and so on. I am sorry we did not have an opportunity to ask Randy some questions, but I gather, from talking to a couple of you, that he left nothing up in the air, he came down very clearly on where he stood and perhaps there was no need for questions. I was going to get in one or two comments. I listened with interest to his recital of his invitation to our beloved colleague John Carter when he invited him to visit his district. He should not feel badly about that. Indeed, John, I am told, wants to take a trip around the world but he is afraid he might fall off the edge.

MR. FENWICK:
Oh, nasty.

MR. SIMMONS:
What time is it, by the way?

MR. LUSH:
Twelve-thirty.

MR. FENWICK:
Unless this is really good, Roger, we would rather eat. We have to come back at two.

MR. SIMMONS:
If you did not have the guts to do it I was about to. I was about to say to Randy that I was particularly delighted that he and Abe came today to contribute to these discussions, and unless you would like to do the honours, I move we adjourn.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The meeting stands adjourned.

The Committee met at 2:00 p.m. in the Colonial Building.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Would the members be seated, please?

I would like to welcome Mr. Roger Grimes, President of the N.T.A., and Mr. Wayne Russell, Executive Director, who will speak to us first this afternoon.

Very briefly, I would just like to say to you gentlemen, the terms of reference for the establishment of this Committee have been interpreted by the Committee in very broad terms. The motion which was passed in the Assembly was rather broad, and the Committee chose to interpret it in the broadest terms.

I have said to the people appearing before the Committee, therefore, that just about anything pertaining to the functioning of the Legislature as it relates to its members is fair ball for commentary or suggestion and, in that context, people who have come before the Committee have spoken in a very wide range as it applies to our mandate.

We appreciate your taking time out and coming and without further ado, you are on.

MR. SIMMONS:
Except to say, Mr. Chairman, that I hope the guys would not mind some questions afterwards, if we feel so inclined?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Certainly.

MR. GRIMES:
Thank you, Chairperson.

I might say at the beginning that we appreciated very much the notice and the invitation to participate in this Select Committee and its deliberations and are grateful for the opportunity to be here today. I would also like to say a special thank-you for the rearranging of the schedule, recognizing our circumstances with other involvements this week that we have to return to almost immediately, since there are other groups waiting for us in other parts of the city.

Also, we apologize at this time, Chairperson, that we do not have the final draft of our printed copy ready to present to you today, so we will be giving an oral presentation and then we will be presenting to you, if you see fit, our final written version with our statistical background and so on, from our office, if that is okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes, please do.

MR. GRIMES:
We are here to make the submission because, as an association, we believe in certain basic principles, and it is on the basis of those that we would like to make our comments today.

We have some guarded suspicions, I suppose, that in fact, committees of this nature, we would hope that the outcome of the deliberations and the decisions the House would make would make further such committees unnecessary and that the levels of remuneration would be such that the House would not have to appoint numerous committees to get certain financial benefits into the hands of members to augment what is a low level of basic salary, as we all recognize.

At this time, I would ask Wayne Russell, as our Executive Director, to make several points that we have agreed with as an Association, in connection with the whole idea of accommodations and benefits for MHAs. I would like if I could, to reserve the right to make just a very slight closing comment at the end, and then we certainly will be available for any questions. With that, thank you for rearranging the schedule for us and I would ask Wayne to go through our oral presentation.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Chairman, as Roger has mentioned, we come here without a prepared text and would ask you to recognize that some of what we say may not be as coherent as we would like to have it and may be somewhat rambling.

We are, as the Vice-Chairman asked, prepared to answer questions on any of the things we say, and I would suggest you direct the questions to Roger and we will handle them from there.

We, in the time that was available to us, had a chance to study the terms of reference and interpret them, I would think, somewhat similar to what you mentioned earlier in a broad term, in that the Committee was looking at the total range of benefits and accommodations as they apply to MHAs. We will not be commenting upon all of them, just certain aspects as we would see them.

First, accommodations as they apply to office space within St. John's and support services: We are not totally familiar with the situation that MHAs find themselves in after being elected and coming to St. John's, except for what we pick up indirectly. Nevertheless, we support strongly the provision of adequate support space and adequate accommodations for MHAs in St. John's. By that, we would mean that MHAs, in our opinion, should be provided with private office accommodations, private offices furnished to an acceptable level for the position, which would allow them to work comfortably and have sufficient space that they could meet individuals who come to visit them at their place of work.

We support strongly, also, that each MHA should be provided with - and we are not in a position to provide precise recommendations as to what that person would be - we have titled it a secretary-researcher - but an individual appointed for each MHA would keep that MHA's work confidential and would work for the MHA while that person is here in St. John's or is otherwise carrying out the role for which he or she has been elected.

Mr. Chairman, mainly because our own organization is an organization divided into a variety of branches or districts around the Province and we appreciate the difficulty of operating in that manner, we strongly support, again, the provision of local office accommodations or a point of contact which constituents would have with their elected members in their own districts.

We do not go so far as to provide recommendations or positions as to whether or not there should be individuals in those offices other than the MHAs, but we do support the concept of a local office, a physical place which would be recognized by the constituents as where their MHA could be contacted when the MHA is not in St. John's attending sittings of the House.

Secondly, travel to districts: We understand that currently members are permitted twelve return trips per year between St. John's and their districts. We have reviewed carefully the situation across Canada, as it applies in other provinces, the territories, and the federal government. Our information shows us that the Newfoundland standard is far below that of the Canadian standard or the Canadian average. Considering the role which MHAs play representing the people who elect them in the various districts and the work required in St. John's, we support the principle that MHAs should be provided with fifty-two return trips per year between their districts and St. John's. We recognize that an MHA's work is such that, due to social functions and also because of required time to be spent away from what we consider to be their permanent place of residence, a percentage of those trips should be available for use by spouse or other members of the family. We will comment later as to how we see such a recommendation being implemented.

Thirdly, accommodation allowance, by which we mean amounts paid to MHAs while present in St. John's for sittings of the House. We understand that Newfoundland operates currently with a system where $59.40 per day is paid for accommodations while the House is sitting. We again have reviewed that amount, comparing it with other provinces, the territories and the federal government, and our information tells us that the amount paid in Newfoundland is not inconsistent with that paid in other provinces, or with the Canadian standard.

We recognize that the work of MHAs is such that in many instances two residences would be required, particularly for those who live outside commuting distance from St. John's. We support the principle that MHAs away from their districts, outside commuting distance, should be provided with adequate allowance to provide accommodations while in St John's. We do not support the principle that an MHA should be able to profit from such an allowance. In other words, the allowance should meet accommodation needs and the MHA should not be permitted to profit from such an allowance.

We are not in a position, because we lack the expertise and it is not something our association is normally involved in, to say to this group what we believe the actual amount to be, except to say we do not believe that the current amount is inconsistent with the standards, and we find that the current amount falls within what we would consider to be adequate levels. We, however, would not be taking a position before this Committee that that amount should not be adjusted, but unlike the other benefits, we do not find this one to be particularly out of line.

We would suggest that perhaps the better system would be to establish a maximum which MHAs may use and then be reimbursed, based upon actual cost incurred.

Basic remuneration: The information available to us, which is 1984 information, which we have had supplied to us by an organization which investigates and provides data on allowances in various categories paid to MHAs, shows us that Newfoundland MHAs rank eleven out of the thirteen - provinces, territories and federal government - in actual basic remuneration.

We find that the average basic salary paid to MHAs in the other provinces and territories, leaving out the federal government, is $32,785, and that Newfoundland MHAs are $9,763 below that average. We find, when you compare the average salary paid in the Provinces, territories and the federal government, that Newfoundland MHAs find themselves $12,656 below that average.

We support the concept that the basic salary for MHAs be increased to a level at least in keeping with Canadian standards. We find that arguments for such a position are sound and we will not repeat the arguments here. We have listened to some of the reports coming out of these hearings and find that the reasons for such an increase have been adequately supplied before.

We note, however, from the information supplied to us, that the additional indemnity paid to our Premier ranks sixth in Canada when we compare it to the Premiers of the Provinces, territories and the Prime Minister of Canada.

We note, in particular, from the information that we have, that the indemnity paid to the Premier is only sixty-eight dollars below the average for the other provinces and territories, and that is a far distance from the basic salary paid to MHAs.

MR. SIMMONS:
Sixty-eight dollars?

MR. RUSSELL:
Sixty-eight dollars. We note, in fact, that when you compare the indemnity of the Premier to that paid in other provinces, the territories, and considering the federal government, in others words, the amount paid to the Prime Minister, that our Premier is only $1,624 below that average.

MR. SIMMONS:
That is an incredible statistic. It really is.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Excuse me, would you repeat the last one again.

MR. RUSSELL:
When you consider the additional indemnity paid to the Premiers in the provinces, the territories and that paid to the Prime Minister, our Premier is $1,624 below that average.

MR. FENWICK:
Your written submission which you are going to forward later, does it have a lot of those statistics in it?

MR. RUSSELL:
We will supply those statistics. We note, also, that the additional indemnity paid to Cabinet Ministers, when you compare Cabinet Ministers in the provinces, the territories and federal government, that Newfoundland ranks seventh. We are making no comment or recommendation as to what these figures represent or what change if any should occur because of them, we make them to the Committee only from the point of view of comparing the basic salary of the MHA to the additional indemnities paid to the Premier and to the Cabinet Ministers.

We emphasize to this Committee, that when you consider the benefits package paid to MHAs that the Committee must consider the total benefits package and not be selective.

We have mentioned certain areas where the MHAs benefits package needs vast improvement, but we note, also, that the pension benefits package available to Newfoundland MHAs ranks among the best in Canada. It is the best in Canada both in terms of contributions made and benefits received. Of course, in making that statement we recognize that as long as the basic salary is low it, in turn, affects the basic pension that the person would receive. If the basic salary is high, then the basic pension would be higher still. However, on the structure of the plan itself, and by that we mean the amount you pay in contributions and the amount received as a basic portion of salary, then your pension plan ranks among the best in all of Canada.

We note, also, that your group insurance plan is one of the best of its kind and is certainly superior, in terms of the amounts paid, to that available to any similar group in this Province. We do not have sufficient data to comment on similar plans across Canada.

We make those things known to the Committee from the point of view that when we consider a benefits package all elements of that benefits package should be considered and not be selective only to those that need improvement.

We note, also, in considering a benefit package for MHAs, that the work of MHAs is such that it enables them to pursue avenues of employment outside the work of an MHA and therefore they are in a position to supplement their income. We are not, by any means, recommending that that should be, we make it only as a note to the Committee that that, in fact, is what happens. We believe this is made possible both by the nature of the work done by the MHA and the fact that attendance at sittings of the House of Assembly are not compulsory. We support, then, improvements in basic salaries, transportation and office accommodations.

The next point which we believe should be raised from that is, how should such improvements occur? We support the immediate provision of single office accommodations and private secretaries in St. John's. We find no reason why a delay should occur with the expansion of the Confederation Building, the revamping or the revision, we believe, on the stand of certain aspects of the Confederation Building itself, that such can occur almost immediately.

We would support a scale which, over the next five years, would see the number of round trips between St. John's and the districts increase from the current twelve to fifty-two. We pick five years for no magical reason, except that it seems a reasonable amount of time between now and the occurence of the next election that these number of trips will be increased by a certain portion each year bringing them up to the fifty-two.

We have found that the basic salary paid to MHAs is below the Canadian standard. We find, also, that the basic salary is below that which we would believe to be acceptable for the position. We find, however, that in that position MHAs are not alone, that the basic salary of teachers is far below the Canadian standard, and the basic salaries of many who work for the provincial government is below the Canadian standard. We cannot accept the position that MHAs' salaries would be increased at a rate which is in excess of that granted to others who work for the provincial government. In the end, in our opinion, it is MHAs who form the government, who are responsible for the increases granted to those who work for the provincial government, including teachers, and we would find that an acceleration of their own rates over and above that which they are willing to grant to others would be, in our opinion, an incorrect decision for elected MHAs to take. We, then, have commented, as we mentioned previously, on certain aspects only of your jurisdiction, and we are prepared to answer any questions which may arise from what we have said.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you very much.

MR. GRIMES:
Chairperson, if I may add a closing commentary to Wayne's presentation before we go to the questions. I think from our statement as an association it remains that in our opinion the evidence is clear and that you as the elected decision makers are party to now making some kind of a decision related to this matter. We certainly respect the system and the elected members, and always have, even though we do not necessarily always agree with the decisions that are made on our behalf. We also believe that it is incumbent upon the House to make sure that there is a benefit package in place to attract the best possible people to its Chamber as the leaders and decision makers in this Province.

I would like to conclude, however, by saying that we feel that the collecting of the evidence may not be the issue at all, and that basically we would see it as a question of whether or not it is politically or morally defensible at this time to institute the changes that are required. We contend that maybe it is not, particularly in the basic salary area, and we may be very surprised as an association if that aspect of the needed improvements is implemented at this point in the history of Newfoundland.

I would not want to end on any kind of a sour note, but I would say, as at the beginning, that we would have some suspicion that this committee itself may be interpreted in certain circles as a sort of set-up to justify some increase for the members of the House while all others remain in the wage freeze instituted by the same House. We certainly hope we are wrong, and we hope that your efforts will lead to the needed improvements at an appropriate time.

There are some, as we have indicated, we have no difficulties with immediately, but others would cause us some difficulty and might draw some negative response or reaction from us. With it, as well, I suppose, we might end by saying that we probably would have welcomed a committee to study benefits for all the employees of the provincial government so that we would have a public forum. However, those employees, I think, have their forum through the realm of collective bargaining, and they engage in that to establish their terms of work and their benefit packages.

So we wish you and your committee

well. We, with all other groups, I think, would await your report and the resulting changes that would result arising from the work that you do.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our submission.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you very much, Mr. Grimes.

Before we go to questions, let me just say that the committee has established the fact that we are here to listen. People who come before us with their recommendations, their points of view are not challenged. We do not consider that our place. We ask questions, yes, for clarification or to eludicate some particular aspect of your presentation. Before I ask my colleagues to raise any questions they have, let me pass along a little information to you purely from the point of view of clarification. With reference to your comments on the wage freeze, to the best of my knowledge and based on the information provided me on the issue of salaries for members of the House, members of the House have been in a wage freeze since 1982 as regards the sessional indemnity. That is the last time the sessional indemnity was increased. In 1983 there was a 4 per cent increase in the travel allowance but not in the sessional indemnity. That is just as a matter of information.

Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, I would like to welcome Wayne and Roger, in some circles known as Roger the Second. I recall fondly the days when I sat in the seat in which Roger now sits. It is always a pleasure to see the NTA out there doing their thing, especially when they do it as well as they have done it here today - a very thorough job. You obviously did your homework, as teachers are prone to do.

Your comment in closing, Roger, about the committee being perceived to be a set-up in terms of it being a mechanism for doing one thing for MHAs while the same thing is not being done for others - that was your point essentially - I can tell you, and I think the public record will bear me out on this, that this Committee grew out of just an incessant frustration among members tripping over carpenters, electricians, and water pails, and plastic dangling from the ceiling, while just trying to do your basic job. It initially started as a vehicle to address the accommodation problem, then, when the motion was struck, Mr. Marshall included in it the issue of benefits which, I may say also for the record, caught some of us a bit by surprise, because we had been clamoring particularly for some way to have the accommodations issue addressed.

A couple of questions: Wayne, I noted your comments about MHAs' basic indemnity in comparison with other jurisdictions. Do you have comparable rankings for teachers' salaries? Can you tell me where the Newfoundland teachers' salaries rank in terms of the other eleven jurisdictions?

MR. GRIMES:
Our latest statistics supplied to us by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, using Statistics Canada as the source, indicates that on average, when we use these numbers, teachers in Canada leave Newfoundlanders dead last. There

are points on salary scales in other provinces wherein Newfoundland teachers at certain points are ahead of Prince Edward Island, in some instances. But because of the advanced age of the Prince Edward Island group and their seniority, when the average calculation is made, Newfoundland teachers, on average, are dead last in Canada.

MR. SIMMONS:
All right. So it is fair comment to say that the Newfoundland teacher finds himself relatively in the same position vis-a-vis the rest of Canada as does the Newfoundland politician, near the end of the pack.

MR. GRIMES:
Right.

MR. SIMMONS:
I wanted to ask Wayne or Roger to relate two of the points that were made on salary because I found them inconsistent. I am probably missing something. Earlier, when you addressed the issue of basic remuneration, Wayne, you mentioned that you could support an increase to at least the Canadian average, then, in summing up, you mentioned that the rate of increase should not be greater than that given other people who work for the government. Now, the first recommendation would call for a very substantial increase. The second would be considerably less. Do you follow me?

MR. RUSSELL:
Our association believes that in order to properly assess what MHAs should be paid the first question that needs to be answered is, where on the scale should they be paid? In other words, rather than doing it on an ad hoc fashion in 1985, and another group looking at it in 1986, 1987 or 1988, I think the Committee should first ask themselves, putting aside the ability to pay, putting aside political considerations as to how much you can or cannot pay, putting aside other practices in the Province, where on the scale should they be paid, all things being equal? On that basis we would support at least the Canadian average, recognizing that the Canadian average itself will change from year to year. But at least you should be in the middle of the pack.

Having recognized that, we are not stating what that number should be. We do not believe we have sufficient data nor do we have sufficient resources of time as you people would have to argue that out for yourselves, what the ultimate amount should be. But, having established that number, the second question comes up, how does one achieve that? At what rate do you change the basic rate to get there?

It is our clear position that under the circumstances in the Province that rate of change should not occur at a rate in excess of that which is granted to the other public employees. As the provincial situation changes, I think the rate of change in the MHAs' benefits can be considered again.

So you would have two things, you would have a goal to be achieved and you would have the rate and time to get there.

MR. SIMMONS:
You made the comment that MHAs can pursue outside employment. Certainly, that technically comes as no news to me, but in practical terms would you want to expand as

to what kinds of employment so I can go look for it?

MR. RUSSELL:
We would not support the position that a member of the House of Assembly should not be a full-time representative. Ideally, the MHA should be a full-time representative. We are not supporting the concept that they should be part-time or that they should have other areas of employment, we note only for the record what the particular circumstance is, and that a number of MHAs, information available to us would show, are not devoted full time to the work of being an MHA, that they have other areas of employment which supplement their income, not a situation which is inconsistent with the work force generally but, I would think, not one that a great deal of people in the work force find that they can easily make available.

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes, moonlighting is everybody's right but very few people's option. When you get one job done, it is time to go to bed.

Your comment on fifty-two return trips a year, are you talking about accountable trips in the sense that an expense claim would be submitted each time per actual expenditure incurred, or are you talking about a draw- down, are you talking about an amount of money which a person could expend for travel purposes? Could you be a little bit more specific there as to what your feelings are?

MR. RUSSELL:
Probably just a couple of comments and then pass it to Roger.

Whenever you look at return trips for MHAs in a Province such as Newfoundland, you have to immediately recognize the situation in which the Province finds itself. One could normally say, well, that should be done by return airfare or by some kind of credit card system and so on. But travel throughout this Province is not a simple matter of getting on an airplane and landing somewhere, it is a combination of a variety of travel and so on and so forth.

As to how members of the House of Assembly would decide to police themselves in the use of that is something that we have not commented on, we would leave it to the House to police itself. I think that anytime you have an arrangement such as travel, there has to be some kind of internal mechanisms that the MHAs would use to police themselves.

We are not concerned about how or under what system, we believe that the people should be allowed to travel fifty-two times a year with a certain percentage made available to family, recognizing the social obligations and the time away from home for a number of MHAs, and we would strongly support the principle that that travel would be done without expense to the MHA. As to how he would do it, obviously our organization has a mechanism we use that we find practical for ourselves, operating a credit card system. The MHAs may wish to do it in a manner similar to that, or in some other manner.

Do you have anything to add, Roger?

MR. GRIMES:
No, I do not think any further commentary is needed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Any other further questions?

MR. FENWICK:
Yes, I have just one.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Fenwick.

MR. FENWICK:
You mentioned the total package and I think you are quite right in looking at the total package. You mentioned the Group Health Plan as being one of the most superior ones that you had seen. I was under the impression that the Group Health Plan which covers MHAs is identical with the one which covers most public employees, which may or may not be a great plan. I am not sure. I have not been a MHA that long, so maybe there is something I am missing there. I was assuming it was the same plan, which means there are probably 10,000 people in the Province covered by the same plan we are, so I was just wondering if there was some other information you had.

MR. RUSSELL:
We understand that the plan is, in fact, similar, perhaps identical. Obviously, such plans vary, depending upon the membership, the employment these people have and so on. We were speaking of the rate of contribution to that plan. We understand that the MHAs' contribution to the plan is at a rate superior to that the other people pay.

MR. FENWICK:
Other than that, I just want to say that I appreciate your comments on it. I noted you put us in the same box by saying that you perceived the need for an increased salary, but, at the same time, you felt that it should not outstrip the salaries of public employees in the Province. There is one other way of looking at that, and I do not know if that is what you meant. You said Newfoundland MHAs were eleventh when compared with other jurisdictions. If the MHAs were eleventh and the teachers were last, if we increase the salaries so that the MHAs were say a median level, fifth or sixth, in the country and we increased the teachers salaries so they were fifth or sixth, would we be talking about the same percentage increases there? Do you follow what I am saying? My perception of what has happened is that you are right in saying both those statistics are correct, but that the spread among MHAs may be a larger spread than the spread among teachers. I do not know if it is. You would obviously be better informed on that than I would be.

MR. RUSSELL:
I would think that your comment with respect to teachers is probably correct. We would have to consider the spread among other members of the civil service, how they would compare to the MHAs. We understand that there are members of the general service in Newfoundland whose salaries are extremely low -

MR. FENWICK:
Yes, there are.

MR. RUSSELL:
- and there may be a spread there which would be similar to the MHAs' spread.

MR. FENWICK:
These are the only comments I have, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):

Any further questions?

Mr. Lush.

MR. LUSH:
I have a question. Mr. Russell, you mentioned the fact that the pension plan was probably one of the best in Canada, and I think you explained why, but I want to clarify the position. You recognize the fact that it is a good plan, but would you not further admit that under its present scheme it does not give a person a tremendous amount of money to look forward to at the end, at this present point in time?

MR. RUSSELL:
Obviously, if you are an MHA in Ottawa and receiving a basic salary of $70,000 and you are getting a 70 per cent pension, you are much better off than somebody getting a $25,000 salary and receiving a 70 per cent pension. Of course, that is what makes the pension plan in Newfoundland for MHAs not what it is in other parts of Canada in the actual amounts received. In the actual structure itself, the pension plan is, of course, in our opinion, superior, and it is superior to the plans paid in the Province to other employees. So when you come into Newfoundland and you say, Here is an MHA's pension plan and here is a teacher's pension plan, when we are both the lowest in Canada in salaries, the MHA does better than the teacher. When you compare the MHA in Newfoundland to one in Alberta or Ontario, the pension received is low because of the fact that the basic remmeration on which it is based is low.

MR. LUSH:
Ours is like a Rolls Royce without wheels!

MR. RUSSELL:
As, of course, are most other public service pension plans.

MR. SIMMONS:
I understood you, Wayne, to indicate that it was the structure of it itself that you were saluting, but the basic fact remains that 75 per cent of nothing is nothing.

MR. RUSSELL:
Yes. One final comment on that, Mr. Vice-Chairman. We agree with that when you compare MHAs in Newfoundland with MHAs across Canada. But when you compare MHAs in Newfoundland to other people who work for the Government of Newfoundland, then I think the MHAs' plan is superior.

MR. SIMMONS:
I see what you mean.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Are there any further questions?

MR. GRIMES:
If there are no others, Chairperson, to comment, rest assured, when we submit our final draft written report from our office in a day or so, the comments that I said for the record in the hearing as to the political time in which you operate and so on are not written, they are stated here orally for the record, and our statistics are included in the documentation for the perusal of your Committee. We again thank you very much for the opportunity and wish you the best in your deliberations.

MR. SIMMONS:
And when this Committee is through with its job, you will not be able to find a president or an executive secretary because they will be be in politics, the whole

works of them!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you very much, gentlemen, for coming along. as I said. As you can appreciate, we have a time constraint in terms of making a report. We have to do so by the 1st of November, ten days after the House resumes sitting. I will just repeat what I have said to other people who have come along. There are other areas which may require further investigation, so one of the recommendations just might be for a few months extension of the Committee to deal with those issues. However, some are urgent and must be dealt with, and we will be making our report on time. Thank you for coming.

MR. GRIMES:
Thank you.

MR. RUSSELL:
Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Our next witness is Mr. Richard Cashin. Mr. Cashin, would you take your seat, please.

I simply want to say a couple of things before you start, Mr. Cashin. Our terms of reference are very general, certainly not detailed in any way. I simply want to afford you the courtesy of saying to you before you commence that the Committee has interpreted the terms of reference in its broadest sense and, consequently, you are free to comment on just about anything that pertains to the functioning of the Legislature as it relates to members of the House. And, as you have noted from the other people who have appeared just before you, you may make your presentation and we would hope that you would be able to stay for a few minutes after that for a few question, if there are any.

MR. CASHIN:
Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
With that in mind, Sir, you may proceed.

MR. CASHIN:
Well, I just have a brief brief. In fact, I had two copies of it with me, but I left one back in the hotel, I guess. I will leave you these notes because they are the same.

On the question of salaries, you know, historically, I think, if you look back at the salaries for MHAs or parliamentarians, well, there were not any. Because, of course, the role of parliamentarian was for the gentry, for the landowner, it was not for the ordinary people. The sort of tradition, then, of British politics was that a man of means went into politics and it was not at all regarded in any way as a full-time position, there was a sense of noblesse oblige, I suppose. But, as our societies become more democratic and egalitarian, people from a broader spectrum of the population have sought public office, and the demands and expectations of the position have altered, more especially in this last generation, with a totally different expectation and perception of the role of government, and correspondently, the potential role of Parliament.

Now, the matter of remuneration is always, of course, a matter of much comment. I remember in 1963 when I was just recently elected to the House of Commons, I had an occasion to be in British Columbia and visited a great aunt of my father's who was then ninety-six, I believe. She had not been back here since 1919 when her brother was sitting in this Legislature. She was quite bright and she chatted. Now, we had made a commitment in that election campaign, because you nasty Tories had not done what ought to have been done on old age pensions. We, then, as Liberals were going to, of course, increase the old age pension. The salaries of MPs had not been touched since 1952, but the populist Tory Prime Minister of the previous six years did not want to touch that issue. Well, we had our Speech from the Throne and we may even have had a disastrous budget, now I cannot remember if that was Walter Gordon's budget, but in any event we did not pass the legislation to increase the old age pensions but we did pass legislation to increase our own salaries. And when I visited my great aunt she reminded me, saying, "I am still waiting for my increase in my pension. You were not very long increasing your own salary." So this is always an issue. How does one address the issues of how do you get a parliamentarian's salary increased? If you really think about it, in the trade union business - and I regret I did not hear all of the brief of the previous organization, which, from what I did hear, seemed to have made some good points - we address that question. I mean, it is part of any organized labour group to address the question of how we always look for more - of course, people need more - but you also have, sometimes, juxtapositions or relationships between groups, and it would seem to me that it might be desirable to ascertain that somewhere in a classification sense that is what an MHA should be paid in relation to others. And you might look in two directions. You might look, since you are now very much at the bottom of the scale, to other parliamentarians. I am not quite sure, because I came in late, what the teachers were saying on that. I know I did hear them say something about "you should not get an increase greater than they get or the rest of us." But when you look at your salaries, it seems to me that it is justified for a one-shot reallocation. I say that to you and I say that here, and it is obviously public, because the teachers may be tenth out of ten, but what is the gap between them and the others? If the gap is as great as it is between you and the rest of the world, then according to my logic you are out of luck. But the figures I have, and I have not done an average, show the range for provinces. Now P.E.I. is $21,900, so you are approximately $1,000 more than Prince Edward Island. Comparable provinces to you, if you wanted to look at it that way, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, if you take an average there you are well out of line. If you take an industrial average it looks to me like it is greater than fifty per cent. I have not done the calculations, I am quite sure you can do that.

So I think, therefore, that a rationale can be made for defending what you are going to do, because, of course, the setting of your salaries, since you are the ones who collectively do it, is something people will say we would all like to be able to do, and it has certain political overtones. But you would be surprised the number of people who do - they are not workers, though, there are others in society who do - and they are sometimes most generous to themselves. We deal with them from time to time as well.

So I would recommend that some base be found. You have the figures from other parliaments. I have not done any research on this other than to put the idea before you, but you might also look at the Public Service where you have deputy ministers, you have assistant deputy ministers and the director level. I mean, sometimes that may appear to be a demeaning way to do it, some might argue that, but one or other of those approaches I think would be defensible. Then, how would salaries adjust thereafter? I think that salaries thereafter could be adjusted, at least for an interim period of years although there might be some other review, but not just on the average of the Public Service. Some might say the average salary of the Public Service, but I think it would be better if you looked at a broader index, and index the salaries of the MHAs to the combination of the private and the public sector rate of increase in the Province, combining those two, not just limiting it to the public sector, over which in one way you do not directly have control because there is a difference between parliament and government. That is what I wanted to say to you on the question of salaries.

Having once served in a Parliament, although not as a member of an administration, I can share with those who now serve in parliaments, a kind of frustration in actually defining what it is that an MHA or an MP has to do. I am aware, as no doubt you are, of the report that our friend, Jim McGrath, has produced. I have a copy of it somewhere but I have not yet had the time to read it. But I did have the occasion of meeting with Jim just before it was completed and I think that it is a very worthwhile thing that the Government of Canada is attempting to do in reviewing the functions of parliament. Because in our system of government our Prime Minister and our Premiers have more power than the President of the United States relative to their jurisdictions. There are less balances on those in power. So I think, therefore, Newfoundland ought to be - I mean, any jurisdiction in which I were involved as a citizen or otherwise, but among provinces - on the forefront there. We do not have to worry about the question of how we rate against other provinces. I think there is a basic philosophical question of the kind of authority that you give to your Parliament.

Now the federal Parliament, which sits longer than yours, I gather is looking at giving more power to committees. I would suggest that in a similar way - and I have not detailed it - as a concept I put before you, that you give powers to your own committees to be able to do investigatory or other kinds of work.

That, therefore, leads to the next question of the support staff that you as MHAs, be you in Opposition or government, should have to assist you in the performance of those duties, not for your sake but for our sake. We tend to, at the federal government level, reflect about great issues, but we have exactly the same system of government at a provincial level and, if these questions are being asked at a federal level, they are just as vital at a provincial level. It is my observation, it is not my experience because I have not lived in all the provinces, but it has generally been my feeling that the rights of the individuals has been an issue on the forefront of the federal Parliament, not provincial parliaments. That is no reflection in any partisan way upon this Parliament or any predecessor ones, or upon any political party.

Somebody may challenge that, there may be some people who might have illustrations from different times, but that has been my sense of it, and I do not think that it is the same kind of public issue at a provincial level as it is at the federal level.

I do not want to talk minimums, but I am led to believe that as Members of the House of Assembly you do not have your own secretarial service. That is an insult to me. We ought to be concerned about that. They might say that some of you are nincompoops. Well, there are nincompoops everywhere. We elect them. If we decide we want to elect nincompoops we should not deny giving the nincompoops the same services as if we have an Aristotle. That is not an issue, even if we want to elect a whole House of nincompoops. Now, I have to stop because I may make maybe even a partisan remark or an unkind remark, and I would not want to do that.

I think these are separate matters. Then it becomes how healthy our democracy is and how attractive it is and the kind of debate we inspire as to the proportion of nincompoops we elect. I would, therefore, say that the support staff should go beyond that.

I say this in a partisan sense: We now have three different political strifes in the House, and I think that that should be appropriately recognized, too, as far as the leader of my party, the NDP, is concerned. I also think that it goes beyond that, that the services provided MHAs, because they are supporters of the government, should not deprive them of their own personal kind of staff facilities and facilities for committees. So I just state that to you in a general way.

The third one was on expenses and accommodations. I have not gone into the details of it. Some of the things I have noted. It seems to me that you ought to have, as a principle, the expenses that are necessary to do the job. I mean, if somebody working for the teacher's union or our union is required to travel, all of that expenditure, or course, is part of the job and it is the same with industry. How do you arrive at the per diem? Is that a fair one? I do not know, I have not analyzed the $59.40 a day. I have not gone into the detail of that. But I have looked, for example, at twelve trips a year to your constituency. Certainly while the House is sitting it may not be practical, I mean, for the member for Torngat (Mr. Warren) to get home or travel to his constituency every week. It may not be practical. But the member for Bonavista North (Mr. Lush) may have a greater opportunity to do that than the member for Harbour Breton. I think that certainly there should be no restrictions on travelling at least once a week and perhaps more regularly. What is wrong with an MHA having a minimum of twice a month when the House is in session? I do not know why it would not be once a week year round even though people might not use it every week. The political issue that you face in the public, it seems to me, is basically one, and that is your salaries; I mean the public now in the sense of its understanding of it.

I know an MHA, who is no longer with us in that sense, who worked on the other end of the Island, who came from very near where Mr. Hickey represents - I will not name him - but I used to meet him on the CN bus going to his constituency, quite regularly visiting his constituency, but those were times when those trips came out of his pocket because on those occasions he had surpassed his allowance. People do not understand that, so I do not see any political problem or taking any flak with your having the expenses and the accommodations necessary for doing the job. I regret that I do not have the time to go into the research of it to help you with that rationale but, I am sure that you have the wit and intelligence to do that yourselves. On the support staff, I think the public expectation is that you would have more adequate staff. And the third thing is the whole role of parliament and therefore I would be for allotting resources to allow your committees to function. I do believe on the last point of salaries, that you will take some flak. Well, we all take flak, it is a part of life, but if you have a solid rationalization for making a one-time adjustment and then tie into that a formula for future increases, then I think if what you do is reasonable and fair then I think there will be little political flak, but there may be some sour grapes. But the point will be made by unions and others that we have been under a wage freeze, which some of us have spoken against on many occasions. There is a principle in collective bargaining which I certainly would not want to see taken away or criticized. I had the experience in a recent round of bargaining, where we had a set percentage more or less that we agreed upon, but then we found anomalies in there; we found in some of the fish plants there were maintenance men who were paid less than what the going rate was, so there was an adjustment above and beyond the regular settlement. It will never be done right if we say that your future increases from this point on if we lift the wage freeze and make it 5 per cent for teachers, then the MHAs get 5, if it is 3 per cent for teachers, MHAs get 3. I agree in principle with what the teachers have said, but with your salaries as out of line as they are, I think you have at least the right to adjust your salaries to be no more out of line than others of us in this society.

That is what I have to say. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you very much, Mr. Cashin.

Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
As the Chairman has said, Rick, we have decided by virtue of our guideline not to get into an exchange of views as such but rather to pick your brain.

MR. CASHIN:

You can smoke here. I forgot that.

MR. SIMMONS:
That you are allowed to do. I want to welcome you. It is good to see you again and thank you for your views. On that last subject, the point you were making about salary, I hear you then say that it would be justified to have a one-time, catch-up amount, to catch up so that we are no farther behind, relatively speaking, than the other groups. Is that what you are saying?

MR. CASHIN:
That is what I am saying.

MR. SIMMONS:
Do you want to quantify that?

MR. CASHIN:
The headlines now, 'Cashin says.'

MR. SIMMONS:
Well, everybody else has said because I put the same kind of question to everybody.

MR. CASHIN:
I have not done the averages but obviously I would put a figure on it if I had all the data. I do not hesitate about saying that.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Russell, who proceeded you there in the chair, gave us figures to the effect that the basic indemnity here was $9,000 below the average of the other provinces, or $12,000 below the average of the provinces plus Ottawa.

MR. CASHIN:
So he is saying that the average salary is $31,000 to $32,000.

MR. SIMMONS:
$32,000 for all the provinces, including Ottawa, $35,000.

MR. CASHIN:
Well, following the logic that I gave, that would be the range.

MR. SIMMONS:
That is all for this time.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Further questions?

MR. FENWICK:
I am curious about the references to the McGrath report, the one on the reform of the House of Commons. I have had a chance to look through it. I do not think I have gotten any more out of it in that time period that your conversation with Jim probably yeilded. But as I understand it it is essentially to take the backbenchers and give them a much fuller role. The committees would have more power to review appointments, there would be a freeing up of party discipline, and so on. One of the things that occurs to me now is that a justification for increased compensation for MHAs might be easier or more palatable if it could be accompanied by an indication that the role should perhaps expand in those areas, that there is a considerable amount of function currently either not done or done just by government that could be put on the backs of these committees, given to backbencher MHAs to bring them more in to the mainstream of what is going on. Do you feel that that would be a better way to do it?

MR. CASHIN:
Well, ~~I~~ mean quite aside from the justification of it - I think it ought to be done. If you decided to say in your salaries you should have a range of salaries and decide you should be closer to the highest Atlantic Provinces and,

therefore, it was the higher portion of that average that was in fact the salary, or, in fact, that you set the salaries as high or higher than New Brunswick, I might come here and say, 'Well, on the salary question you should follow the literal advice that you would get from any central labour agency. We have had a two year wage freeze in the public service, at least you should have the same.' But in this case what you say is correct if you were to do both at the same time, bearing in mind that you are aware from time to time of how your constituents feel. So I suppose the answer is obvious.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Any further questions?

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
Back to the salary issue. I was just reflecting, Rick, that you are not the first Cashin to hold fort in this Chamber, are you? Was Peter your uncle or your great uncle?

MR. CASHIN:
I had an uncle and a grandfather who sat when this was the Parliament, sat on both sides.

MR. FENWICK:
Probably both sides on the same day.

MR. SIMMONS:
Third in a proud line.

Rick, on the salary issue again, just let me come at it from another direction. You mentioned the need to look for a base and you mentioned at one point the senior Public Service. I am not expecting you to be familiar with the individual salary levels because I could not quote them to you at all, but do you have any thoughts as to whether there is any justification for comparing the MHA role with, say, deputy minister, assistant deputy, or director level?

MR. CASHIN:
There is something of an anomaly. This may be accidentally, but the MPs' salary is the same as an SX range, and that is somebody who is usually at the director level, could even be a director general now, because in Ottawa they used to have directors, but they got so many layers there is another layer in there now, director general, and some of the director generals would go higher than the MP salary scale. But when you look at the salary scale of responsible Public Service people, surely you are nowhere that. There is a person who is appearing after I appear who is far more knowledgeable on the those questions and answers, the lady who is going to appear next, whom I was chatting with, from the Government Managers Association. I assume she would know more about the salary ranges. But I would be very surprised to find that at $23,000 we have people at the director level with that kind of responsibilities. I assume it would be in the $40,000 range.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Directors are in the $40,000 range.

MR. SIMMONS:
I guess my question was do you see that as a plausible base to say that the MHA ought to be in the salary range of X category in the Public Service.

MR. CASHIN:
I recall that that, some years ago, somewhere, was discussed. I do not have any record of it, but I have a sense that somewhere along the line, fifteen years ago, perhaps, that was talked about, either here or in Ottawa. And the objection to it probably was that it might have been too specific to do a detailed evaluation and say the M.H.A. equates to a director. But a combination of that might serve as the kind of rationale to increase the salary. I mean, we have had a number of teachers who are in the Assembly. I believe we have at least two or three here of one kind or another, is that not right?

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes.

MR. CASHIN:
There are a great many people in this Province who do not make $23,000, but people in responsible positions expect to make a lot more than that, so that your salaries are out of line. And my point is, since they are out of line, you have a combination of these figures to bring in and that figure would run from somewhere between $32,000, minimum, up to $35,000 or $36,000 and maybe you could, looking at the New Brunswick figure, come closer to that. If you do that, of course, people would say, 'Look at this big increase', but if, at the same time, you attempt to deal with how in the future you will be remunerated, I think that will lessen it somewhat and then you will, in a sense, have dealt with the matter for quite a long time, perhaps indefinitely.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, another question. Rick, would you be prepared to give us your views on the question of full-time provincial politicians versus part-time. You know the two schools of thought, I am sure. Where do you come down?

MR. CASHIN:
Well, there are some Tories, true Tories - not all P.C.s are true Tories, you know that. You know what I mean. You know who I am talking about.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. CASHIN:
We have a different mind set. Take, for example, somebody who takes a leave of absence from a fish plant and seeks public office. What opportunities for other work does that person have? Would it not be better if that person, once on his leave of absence, could address himself or herself to doing the job of an M.H.A.? Now, if you are of the landed aristocracy, or if you are in the law profession in the city of St. John's and you can run down the street, then you can afford to be righteous about this thing. But I think we ought to be more egalitarian in our approach and, therefore, if there are those who, by their energy or inheritance or luck or circumstances, whatever it is, from time to time, moonlight, then that will be in due course adjudicated one way or another by their constituents. If their constituents are content with that, let them be content with it, but do not preclude members of the organization of which I am president, handicap them or people from other organizations, or people who are unorganized, salesmen or somebody who has a small business or whatever, from going into politics. And we

should look at ways to remunerate them so it can be regarded as pretty much a full-time position. I mean, you would know better than I do about what others do.

The problem, as I understand it - and it has been a problem in this Province since I have been around - is the question of other income for M.H.A.s. I mean, that is a problem. The result of it was under the Smallwood government - and I do not follow what they do with you fellows now that you are on the government side - but in Smallwood's time, when they were mostly on the government side, well, they were appointing people to boards, finding other ways to get other remuneration for people, and that is not going at it straight up. So I think we should go at it straight up and have the job full-time and pay for it. That is a freer, more honest and more democratic way to do it and I think it will, in the long haul, if it has any impact on that, it will be to improve the quality.

MR. SIMMONS:
One final question. You alluded a couple of times to the question of a mechanism for future increases. Could you be more specific? I think you are familiar with the Ottawa way. They have a statute which triggers the appointment of usually a two-member commission after each new Parliament is returned which makes recommendations to government, and usually they are adopted by resolution. I think there has to be either an Order in Council initiative or a parliamentary one, I am not sure which. It requires a political initiative, is my point. Would you see that kind of a formula?

MR. CASHIN:
If you accepted the possibility that we were to have something approaching the higher middle of the scale, then you might say it is settled forever. Other indexes could go out altogether. So I think you would have to have a period of review. If you say after every election, well, we tend to go sometimes three years. I personally would not object to that. You may want to put a fixed time on it, say, five years.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Mr. Cashin, one question before you continue. Can I interpret what you said with regards to part-time, full-time MHAs this way; Judging from what you have said, your feelings are that people who moonlight, if you want to put it that way, if they do it through their initiative, etc., fine, they will be judged by the electorate, who will determine whether they have been part-time or full-time.

MR. CASHIN:
That is right.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
However, the system should be such that they are not required to do it to provide for their families or to supplement their income in terms of providing for their families. This is really where you are.

MR. CASHIN:
That is where I am. I feel that a very solid principle that can be defended with your constituents, most of whom, as in most constituencies, will make less.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much.

We realize that you are into some meetings of your own and have a very busy schedule. We want to thank you for coming along.

MR. CASHIN:
Thank you.

I will leave this with the Clerk my notes for you to see.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much.

Let the Committee rise for five minutes, stretch our legs, grab a coffee and come right back.

Recess

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Order, please!

Our next witness is Mrs. Elizabeth Hiscock who is here representing the Government Managers Association. Mrs. Hiscock, there is no need for me to take up any time to say anything to you because you have heard some of the commentary and my very brief statement to Mr. Cashin. You know what we are all about or why we are here. You have a pretty wide scope to make comments on any facet of the Legislature.

MRS. HISCOCK:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Government Managers Association would like to avail of this opportunity to present its views to your Committee relative to the issue of wages for members of the House of Assembly.

The Association holds the view that a reasonable and adequate salary should be paid to Members of the House of Assembly. Members are expected to be competent, qualified and secure individuals who can maintain a good standard of living to meet the needs of their families and to provide for additional expenditures imposed by public life.

The Association expresses the opinion that remuneration should be in the form of an annual salary as opposed to sessional pay. If and when an individual runs for public office, he or she should be fully aware of the annual remuneration which will be received.

The annual salary provided should compensate members for all activities related to the office. There should not be a need for additional remuneration to members serving on committees, etc., since such activities should be considered as part of the responsibilities of public office. This is not to say that out-of-pocket expenses related to such activities should not be extra, but that an additional salary should not have to be provided in certain instances.

At the present time, government is still in a period of restraint, a fact which should not be ignored in any recommendation. Indeed, this had already been alluded to by a Member of the House of Assembly relative to the issue of salary review for members. It is adequate to say that all receiving remuneration from the public purse have experienced the difficulties imposed by restraint during the past several years. Accordingly, though we strongly support our earlier statement, we question whether the implementation should not be delayed until restraints have been removed for all public service employees.

We have only touched on the subject of salaries. We have not gone into any of the other benefits or whatever. We would just like to stay with this issue.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to have made this brief presentation.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very much, Mrs. Hiscock. Any questions?

MR. SIMMONS:
I want to also welcome Mrs. Hiscock. Elizabeth, thank you for coming and for your views on behalf of the group. I appreciate you being brief and to the point.

One of the points that concerns us is the salary issue. I want to be clear on the reference to out-of-pocket expenses. I understand that your organization is saying a salary should provide a stipend in respect of all the MHAs responsibilities, whether committee, House of Assembly or whatever. If he or she incurs expenses in the pursuit of those responsibilities, there ought to be a mechanism of reimbursing him or her. Is that right?

MRS. HISCOCK:
Certainly. For instance, everyone has travel requirements. Out-of-pocket expenses such as these should not be included in your salary.

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes.

MRS. HISCOCK:
These expenses would be reimbursed as the need arises.

MR. SIMMONS:
Let me be clear on what you said at the very end about implementation. There was a negative in there and I was not sure if you meant not to wait for the freeze to be over or wait for it to be over.

MRS. HISCOCK:
I meant wait for the freeze to be over.

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes, okay.

Thank you very much.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Mr. Fenwick.

MR. FENWICK:
I have just one question. It is a little bit off the subject, but we have a wide mandate. I was just wondering how the Newfoundland and Labrador Government Management Association arranges for increases in salaries for your members or do you get involved with that at all?

MRS. HISCOCK:
Well, the managers in government right now are not in any collective bargaining position. We really, I guess you would say, are at the mercy of government.

MR. FENWICK:
Lucky persons.

MRS. HISCOCK:
Yes. We are in the process right now preparing a salary brief to present to government because early next year, of course, the restraint programme will be lifted for the managers. We want to be prepared to make a presentation of behalf of our managers from doing surveys across Canada and even here within the public and the private sector.

MR. FENWICK:
What groups do you cover? Is it from the deputy ministers on down?

MRS. HISCOCK:
The main group that are in our association are from the director level down. We do have some people who were directors and were promoted to assistant deputy ministers and who have remained in the association. Deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers are on the executive pay plan. We feel that they have their own committee to discuss salaries and benefits.

MR. SIMMONS:
What are the numbers involved in your organization? How many people are involved?

MRS. HISCOCK:
We have approximately 500 members at the moment. We have branches in Labrador, the Stephenville area, Corner Brook and right across Newfoundland.

MR. SIMMONS:
Is membership optional?

MRS. HISCOCK:
Yes, membership is optional.

MR. SIMMONS:
What percentage of the total potential membership is represented by the 500?

MRS. HISCOCK:
As far as we know, it is approximately 46 per cent to 50 per cent. We have found great difficulty in finding the exact number of government managers. We also have some members in our association from the various agencies, so it is not just government proper.

MR. SIMMONS:
Are you first and foremost then a welfare organization preoccupied with the welfare of your members or are you a social or a professional organization or a combination of both?

MRS. HISCOCK:
We are a professional organization. The association was formed in 1978 by a group of managers who were in government and felt the need for a group. That was when the first performance review programme was introduced. It was the feeling of the managers that we could really be swamped with this but maybe if we had a larger group, we would have a stronger voice. That was why the association was formed.

We are also involved in professional development. We provide legal assistance as well to any managers within our association, if they have any legal problems or discipline problems or whatever within the office. So we are growing quite steadily.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Would it be fair to say what you are to the government managers across the Province what the NTA is to teachers?

MR. FENWICK:
Without bargaining rights.

MRS. HISCOCK:
Without bargaining? Yes.

MR. FENWICK:
Speaking of that, is there any intentions to do it?

MRS. HISCOCK:
No. A lot of our members expressed fear in the beginning of the association. They want to be a professional group. I do not

mean to say that people in collective bargaining groups are not professional groups, but they wanted to stay away from that area at the present time.

MR. FENWICK:
If this Committee does not work, we are going to get a trade union in here to sign up all fifty-two members in the House and see if we can negotiate, but God knows with whom!

MRS. HISCOCK:
You can always join our association.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Mr. Lush.

MR. LUSH:
You mentioned the freeze. Do you have any knowledge about when the freeze will terminate?

MRS. HISCOCK:
Well, we were told, of course, that it was a two-year freeze. Everyone has heard about the two-year freeze. Most of the managers now that are in our association - I used to be a manager in government myself - are just waiting. We have gone through one year now where we did not get a raise. Our two years are going to be up soon. A lot of the bargaining units will have their two years up in the Spring and so on.

MR. LUSH:
That is my understanding. Everybody is coming out of the freeze in the coming 1986 fiscal year.

MRS. HISCOCK:
Yes.

MR. LUSH:
Everybody, including all bargaining units, will be out of the freeze. So, therefore, we look at ourselves in that respect, unlike a union that has ongoing negotiations, we are set up now.

It is probably unfortunate we were not set up in January but we are set up now and we will not be set up any more. So, quite obviously, we would like for people to understand that situation. We are certainly aware of the freeze but we want to emphasize that it is our understanding that every bargaining unit and non-bargaining unit I suppose for that matter, for the purposes of salary increases and other benefits, will be out of the freeze in this coming fiscal year.

MRS. HISCOCK:
That is our understanding.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Mr. Woodford has a question.

MR. WOODFORD:
What is the average wage of the members of your association?

MRS. HISCOCK:
That is really a very difficult question. I do not know if you are familiar with the pay system but there are various management pay levels in government and there are, of course, various steps within the pay levels. Some of the directors would be at the top of the scale of say PL 15, PL 16, then we have some who are on a PL2, like executive secretaries are PL2, and PL3. I would say probably, now this is completely off the cuff, I would say about the $23,000 to $25,000 range is average because of the various aspects of the management scales.

MR. SIMMONS:
What are the parameters? What is the high point and the low point?

MR. FENWICK:
Executive secretaries to directors.

MR. SIMMONS:
No, I mean dollar-wise.

MRS. HISCOCK:
An executive secretary could make anywhere from $16,000 to $18,000, I am not really sure right now, but in that range. And then a director would probably be up in the forties.

MR. SIMMONS:
Up to -

MR. FENWICK:
The forties somewhere.

MRS. HISCOCK:
In the forties.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Would you say that the average salary of a director, or the average director is in the $40,000 range?

MRS. HISCOCK:
I would say about $38,000 to $40,000. A lot of the directors - as the phrase goes - work up through the ranks and a lot of them by the time they would get up -

MR. CHAIRMAN:
A director for example who is a PL 19, which is one of the higher levels, would be in - I believe I am safe in saying - in the area of the upper $40,000 range.

MRS. HISCOCK:
Oh yes, especially on top.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
$47,000 or $48,000.

MRS. HISCOCK:
Yes, but then some of the lower directors would be probably earning $35,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
So $40,000 is about the average.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes, Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
I realize Elizabeth that you mentioned that you wanted to restrict yourself to the salary issue. Let me put a couple of questions that do not relate to that to you and if you want to decline answering then we understand. We would be interested in having your views, or those of your organization, on the question of accommodations, office facility, and support staff for MHAs. Have you any views to offer the Committee on that subject?

MRS. HISCOCK:
Personally, I feel every person who deals with people on confidential matters should at least be able to close a door and have a private area. I think that everyone should have their own office personally. In reagrd to support staff, as Rick Cashin would say, I would feel that some support staff is in order.

MR. SIMMONS:
On the subject of travel, you covered it indirectly in relation to reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses. Let me just put a question to you, in your capacity as a citizen, a voter and a taxpayer. A member of the House of Assembly such as myself, is elected by a constituency and many

of the responsibilities I pursue relate to that constituency itself. On many occasions, in addition, I am called upon to vote on legislation that affect the miners in Labrador West, or urban workers in St. John's or any number of categories of consumers and workers. Would you see justification in having members of the House able to travel at public expense outside their own constituency?

MRS. HISCOCK:
The feeling I would think is that the member's prime importance and prime responsibility is to the constituency. But of course then when one becomes a minister that brings him further afield. I do not think the travel issue should be taken for granted. I think that if one feels it is necessary to travel to someone else's constituency, say, down in Wabush or Labrador City or whatever, I would see some type of procedure that the person has to go through.

MR. SIMMONS:
Accountability.

MRS. HISCOCK:
Yes, to be accountable. And I do not mean for someone to go to the Premier tomorrow and say, 'Look, I want to go to Labrador City; please sign this form.' I mean some type of procedure should be in place so that if you felt the need to go somewhere, that it be written as to why you feel you should go, whether there is anyone else going, and other answers to questions along those lines.

MR. SIMMONS:
Without putting words in your mouth, are you saying then, that you, as one of those supposed to be represented here, one of those in whose interest we enact legislation, that you see a need for legislators to travel at public expense outside their immediate constituencies?

MRS. HISCOCK:
I see a need every now and then. I do not see a constant need. I think the person was elected to be responsible for the constituents in a riding and I think that the prime responsibility of the member is to serve the constituents.

MR. SIMMONS:
Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Are there any further questions?

Thank you very much, Mrs. Hiscock, for taking the time out and coming.

This meeting now stands adjourned.

Select Committee on Member Services, Accommodations, and Benefits

Public Hearing
St. John's
October 1, 1985

Select Committee on Accommodations and Benefits of Members

The Committee met at 2:30 p.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Order, please!

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the hon. Mr. McGrath to our hearings. Mr. McGrath wrote me quite some time ago expressing an interest in appearing before the Committee and I want to, in advance, take the opportunity to express the Committee's thanks. I am sure I speak for all my colleagues when I express our thanks to you for appearing before the Committee. We realize that you come before us at some inconvenience. We look forward to hearing what you have to say to us.

I do not think I need to go into any detail with regards to our terms of reference. We talked to you while in Ottawa and I believe it is fair to say that you have a clear understanding of how we interpret the terms of reference of the Committee. Without further ado, I will ask you to make your statement. After, I hope you can stay with us for a little while so that we can enter into some dialogue by way of question and answer. That is the format that we have used. So, you are on Sir.

MR. McGRATH:
Thank you very much Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. It is trite to say and also true that for me it is a great pleasure to be in this building. The last time I was in this building was a ceremonial sitting of the House of Assembly. I forget the occasion but it was perhaps the anniversary of Confederation. I am not sure. But there was a ceremonial sitting of the House here. Prior to that, of course, I was here frequently when the House of Assembly sat here after 1949. Indeed, looking back up there at the general gallery I recall many an afternoon coming down here after school to watch the National Convention in session. I would go home fascinated at night to hear it all over again on the radio. It was a moving experience because it was a very important and traumatic time in our history.

It is perhaps in the context of our history that I want to talk today to you about your mandate and what input I can have into your deliberations. Insofar as my own credentials are concerned, Mr. Chairman, I have been a member of the Standing Committee on Procedures and Organization of the House of Commons for most of my career. I was a member of the Special Committee on Procedural Reform of the last parliament, together with your distinquished Vice-Chairman, Roger Simmons, who at that time was a member of the House of Commons. It was a twenty-member committee. We sat for over two years and made ten reports, nine of them substantive reports. Three of them were implemented.

I just want to add as a footnote to that. Mr. Simmons, who at that time was the member of the House of Assembly for Burin-Burgeo, made a major contribution to the committee because he brought to it his own experiences as a provincial legislator. He was able to bring that perspective to the committee. He joined the committee when we visited Washington and London and was a part of what - I am sure he will agree - was a very unique experience. Unique in that you had twenty Members of Parliament, representing all three political parties in the House of Commons, working by concensus. There were no votes in that committee.

That may not sound like a big thing. Indeed, for a seven-member committee, it is not a big thing. However, it is difficult even for a seven member committee, as I myself found out subsequently when I chaired a special committee, but for a twenty-member committee to work by concensus is really quite an accomplishment, although it meant, unfortunately, that we were not able to deal with the more controversial things because we did, as I say, operate by concensus.

As a consequence of that, a new committee was struck in this present Parliament because, paradoxically, the committee of which Mr. Simmons and I were members in the last Parliament was struck out of a reaction to an incident that took place in the House of Commons - the incident of the bells. You will recall at that time the Opposition, of which I was an outspoken member, used the bells as procedural delaying tactic - indeed the bells rang for two weeks - in order to get the government to divide what we looked upon as an omnibus bill, as a piece of legislation that, in fact, contained nine separate legislative measures. This was a measure dealing with the National Energy Program. In terms of having the bill split so that we could deal with it separately, the Speaker ruled against us. We felt that that was wrong and we felt the government should not have proceeded. Anyway, for better or worse, that was the result of it. That opened up a Pandora's box because since that time other Legislatures in Canada have used the bells as a delaying tactic and as a divisive tactic. A simple motion to adjourn the House can delay the business of the House indefinitely. Anyway, the special committee was struck to deal with that and never got around to dealing with it because we could not get agreement on it. When the new Parliament met, the new government decided that this matter had to be cleared up and they decided to strike a new committee. They gave this Committee the mandate to go well beyond procedure. Indeed, almost without precedent, I was announced as the Chairman of the Committee before it was struck. That put me in a very good position and provided me with a very good opportunity to negotiate with the government on the terms of reference. I use the word 'negotiate' because we did not want to reinvent the wheel, as it were, and go over the same ground as the last committee. As a result of these negotiations we came up with a very broad mandate a part of which touches directly upon your owner of reference having to do with services for members and having to do with emoluments. Everything touching on the life of a member of parliament was, in fact, included in that order of reference.

We deliberately set out to accomplish our work within a very narrow time frame. Indeed, a part of the order of reference was that we would report to the House by June 28 this year, which really gave us less than eight months to complete our work. But that narrow window tended to focus our attention. It was, in fact, an advantage because we focused our attention on our mandate to the exclusion of everything else. We felt this was a very rare opportunity to really bring in substantial reforms.

In the course of our deliberations we visited the U.S. Congress, the National Assembly of France, the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany and, of course, the Parliament of Westminster. In addition to that, we sent a consultant to Camberra and we sent one to New Zealand as well. So we wanted to touch all of the major parliaments. We could not go to Camberra ourselves because we could not find the time. As well, I had visited all of the major parliaments of the world, with the exception of the Supreme Soviet and it is difficult to visit the Supreme Soviet because it only meets for two days a year and, of course, it is the ultimate in efficiency. We do not want to become that efficient, and we have to be very careful in what we do in terms of parliamentary reform, that we do not destroy the fundamentals of parliament in the name of efficiency, because parliament, by definition, cannot be efficient.

In the course of visiting all these parliaments, I was struck by one thing, and that is the great emphasis on committees. Indeed, most of the work of all these parliaments now, including the British Parliament, is done through a reformed committee system.

As a matter of fact, the Federal Republic of Germany, which is a federation not unlike ours in many respects, does 90 per cent of its work in its Standing Committees. Unlike our system, all their standing committees are in camera. They do not meet in the public at all. Of course, that would not be compatible with our traditions. But it does make for more collegiality and a much greater opportunity to arrive at consensus because meetings do take place in camera without having the public, either directly or through the media, taking a close look at the proceedings, which tends to cause members to put forward partisan positions.

The same is true of the National Assembly of France. As I said the Parliament at Westminster has a new committee system in place which we have copied, to some extent. They have devised their system into select committees which are struck to examine bills and standing committees which are small, by definition, with a tenured membership which have an ongoing investigatory function. It has worked very well for them.

Of course, probably the best example of a parliamentary committee system would be the U.S. Congress where the Committees the House of Representatives and the Committees of the Senate are really the main way that that parliament functions. Although, they had made the mistake of allowing their subcommittees to get out of control with the result, of course, that there has been a proliferation of committees in the U.S. House of Representatives and in the U. S. Senate.

Probably the most progressive legislature in Canada, in terms of parliamentary reform, is the National Assembly of Quebec. I hope you will have an opportunity to look at their new rules. The National Assembly of Quebec has gone the committee route in bringing about major reforms to the system. Their rules, as a matter of fact, were only adopted provisionally two to three years ago. They were made permanent in the Spring of this year. What they had done in the Quebec National Assembly is organize their committee system into eight standing committees. These committees are organized generically, if I can use the term, as opposed to having the usual Committee on Public Accounts or the Committee on Estimates or the Committee on what have you, they had devised a committee system which is as follows: they have a Committee on Institutions. That looks after the Executive Council, Justice, Intergovernmental Affairs and Constituency Affairs. Then they have a Committee on the Budget and Administration, and of course that is obvious what that deals with. They have a Committee on Social Affairs. Again, it would be obvious what it deals with. There is a Committee on Labour and the Economy, which deals with industry, commerce, tourism, labour, science, etcetera. There is a Committee on Agricultural, Fisheries and Food. There is a Committee on Planning and Infrastructures, which has to do with local communities, planning, transportation, the environment, recreation, fish and game. Then they have a Committee on Education and a Committee on Culture.

The strength of this new Committee system is that they have been given their own budgets and they have been made almost totally independent of the Government in that they have self-starting powers. They can carry out their own investigative functions, in addition to carrying out the legislative responsiblities of the Legislature when it refers a Bill or refers the accountability function, in terms of dealing with estimates.

I would strongly recommend to the Committee, Mr. Chairman, that you take a look at the new Standing Orders of the Quebec National Assembly. You have, I understand visited the Ontario Parliament - Queens Park. They, of course, have a very progressive committee system as well. They lean rather heavily on the committee system, although they have not gone as far as the Quebec National Assembly. The Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly, who is here today, was a member of a delegation who was in Quebec City last summer, where I had the honour to give the key note speech on the reforms of the House of Commons. We had an opportunity to talk with the Speaker and with members of the Quebec National Assembly first hand on their new rules because they have only been adopted permanently, as I say, as of this year.

I mentioned to you the Quebec National Assembly because I think it is more relavent to your order of reference than the work of the Special Committee on the Reform of the House of Commons, although I think, for the purposes of the record, as this is being recorded, I should say that we came to the conclusion very quickly following our deliberations, following the commisioning of studies and the hearing of witnesses, that the best way to reform Parliament was through a new, reorganized, strengthened committee system. What we have put in place in the Canadian House of Commons is a committee system that separates the legislative function from the accountability function, so now we have in place what we call

Legislative Committees. Everytime a Bill is given second reading, the Striking Committee automatically has to convene within five days and it strikes a Legislative Committee of not more than thirty members, and not less than twenty members. That Committee would be chaired by a Chairman chosen from a panel of Chairman which has been put in place arbitrarily by the Speaker after consultation. In other words, it does not elect its own Chairman, its Chairman is appointed by the Speaker from a panel. He has a panel of twenty that he can chose from, including members of the Opposition parties and indeed, in the Quebec National Assembly they have divided their eight Committees between, I think, five Government, and three Opposition and I commend that to you as well.

I believe the Chairmanships should be divided on the basis of the representation in the House of the parties. We should always ensure, by and large, that the Opposition would chair some of the Committees, in addition to the Public Accounts Committee. The Legislative Committees would then leave the Standing Committees, which we recommend to be seven-member committees and here, I think this is relevant. We recommend the Standing Committees be not more than seven members and that they have a tenured membership, so that the Committee would be able to develop expertise and colegiality. In other words, members would get to know one another, they would get to know the areas over which they have jurisdiction and, as a consequence of that, they would be in a better position to operate by consensus. Tenure, we felt, was necessary because, if the Government Whip or the Opposition Whip could change the membership of the committee well, that would give them virtual control over the membership of the committees and we wanted to eliminate that.

We also stipulated that Parliamentary Secretaries or Parliamentary Assistants would not be permitted to sit on Standing Committees. We felt pretty strongly about that because Parliamentary Secretaries are, in fact, Members of the Government. They receive an emolument from the Government, they, in the case of the Federal Parliament, are sworn. They take an oath and they are not private members. The Parliamentary Secretary is only on a Committee to carry out the instructions of his Minister and to try to manipulate the Committee to conform with Government policy and we felt that was wrong.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (Hickey):
I just want to ask you, if you said Parliamentary Secretaries are not allowed to sit on committees?

MR. McGRATH:
On Standing Committees.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Not just not be Chairman, but not be on them?

MR. McGRATH:
Oh, my goodness, gracious, you could not conceive of a situation where a Parliamentary Secretary would be a Chairman. That would warrant contrary to all Parliamentary tradition, I mean, if you are going to have a Parliamentary Secretary chairing a Committee you may as well have a Minister chairing a Committee and it is not really a Parliamentary Committee

MR. SIMMONS:
But, all three of our Estimates Committees are chaired by Parliamentary Secretaries here.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
This is what occurred to me when you mentioned to.

MR. McGRATH:
I did not know that. That is novel. It is very interesting. Parliamentary Secretaries are almost junior ministers. How can you expect impartiality and objectivity in dealing with estimates or in dealing with anything if the person in the Chair is a member of the government. In any event, Mr. Chairman, we felt the tenured membership was important and we felt it was important not to have parliamentary secretaries on the committees because we felt it was important for the committees to be independent of the government.

MR. SIMMONS:
Not to interrupt your presentation but just to be clear, is it your recommendation that they not sit or has that been accepted, is that now policy in Ottawa?

MR. McGRATH:
No, that is the recommendation in the third report which has not yet been implemented. It was a unanimous recommedation in the third report. The government has indicated that it will be informing the House as to how it proposes to go about implementation but I can tell you that, by and large, the government has agreed with the recommendations.

Getting back to your question, Mr. Chairman, about parliamentary secretaries chairing committees, we look at the whole question of providing salaries or extra emoluments or a stipend for a committee chairman and we deliberately decided against it after consultation with our friends in Europe and in Washington. If a member was receiving a special kind of a stipend for carrying out his function as chairman, then he could be put in a conflict of interest, especially in our parliamentary system. He could be beholding to the government, if you like, for his extra salary as committee chairman and we recommended against it, that chairmen not receive extra emoluments. But we also recommended that the role of the chairman be upgraded, that it become more than a presiding role, that it become a leadership role. In other words, the committee chairman would have a management function in controlling the budget - committees would have their own budget - and also have a spokesman responsibility, if I could put it that way. He would be spokesman for the committee and would, in fact, become more like the US Congressional Committee Chairman, in terms of being able to articulate the position of the Committee, as opposed to the position of the House, or the position of the government.

There is a very important reason for all of this, Mr. Chairman. It is critically important that the executive function be separate from the legislative function. "Ah", somebody will say, "that is a congressional system." No, I am not talking about a congressional system. Under our constitution, really, a person can be appointed to the Cabinet without being a member of the House of Assembly or a member of the House of Commons. He or she would have to get elected with a reasonable period of time but, for example, you can be a member of the Cabinet in Ottawa by being a member of the Senate. There have been people who have been Cabinet ministers who never sat in the House. For example, Pierre Juneau was Minister of Communications for a period of time and never sat in the House. He lost in a subsequent by-election.

It is important to separate the function of the government from the function of parliament. The function of parliament is to hold the government accountable on a day-to-day basis. This is not to suggest, in terms of the legislative function, that the government itself should be the sole instigator of legislation but the House, obviously, has to react to the government's legislation, it has to be given priority, but other members of the House, other than members of the government, should be entitled to present bills. We have that, of course, in the House of Commons as you have in the House of Assembly in the form of private members' bills which everybody knows they do not go anywhere. Has there ever been a private members' bill become law in Newfoundland, I do not recall one. There has never been one in the House of Commons in recent years. There was one ten years ago I think which made the beaver our national symbol, but that is of no consequence. We have made major recommendations in our rules so that private members' bills will be able to become law and there will be a more meaningful process for private members' legislation, again emphasizing the fact that the government does not have the sole responsibility in terms of legislation.

It is important as well, Mr. Chairman, that the distinction be made between the government and the House, or the executive and the Legislature, not only in terms of the way we frame our Standing Orders and our procedures, but it is also important, I think, in a symbolic and a physical sense. That is why, for example, the Canadian House of Commons, the legislative function of the Canadian Constitution is physically separate from the governmental function of the Canadian constitution. The parliament buildings contain only legislators and people who are involved in the legislative process. Ministers have offices there in their capacities as members of the House, not in their capacities as ministers. People forget that. But they also have offices in their departments, not as members of the House, but as ministers. So there is a physical separation and that has always been maintained nationally and it has been maintained in certainly most of the provincial legislatures that I have visited.

That brings me to a point I want to make which may not seem entirely relevant. I think that this Committee, Mr. Chairman, has a tremendous opportunity, perhaps the only opportunity we will have in our lifetime of addressing what I consider to be a major wrong, a major grievance in terms of what happened to the Newfoundland Parliament.

I think it was a sad day for Newfoundland when we vacated this building and moved our Legislature into the Confederation Building. I think it was a sad day in many respects. It was a sad day for parliamentary government in Newfoundland because we lost the physical separateness of the two functions. As a consequence of that - and I do not want to speak disrespectfully but I speak as a Newfoundlander - the Legislature almost became another department of the provincial government because it was located on one of the floors of the Confederation Building, in this case the ninth floor of the Confederation Building. The Premier's office was very close to it and ministers offices were close to the Legislature and civil servants were going to and from. It just lost its independence. Whatever independence it had as a Parliament I believe it lost it in that move.

You take a look at this building. This building is alive with history. There are not too many provinces in this country that can boost of a building like this. This was the seat of the first Representative Government here. It was the seat of our first Responsible Government. This was the seat of one of the first five Dominions under the Statute of Westminster, the Parliament of Newfoundland. It was the seat of the National Convention and it was the seat of the first Legislature under Confederation. All of the major events of our history took place here and it saddens me to see what is happening to this building today.

I believe that you have an opportunity. These should be decisions of Parliament and not of the government. Parliament decides on how it conducts itself, not the government. I think Parliament should decide now that the government has made plans to renovate the Confederation Building and to extend it, it gives you an opportunity now to move the Parliament of Newfoundland back where it belongs, to the Parliament Building of Newfoundland.

People may say that Jim McGrath is a quintessential Tory or a hopeless romantic. That is not true. I am doing it for very important reasons. I am doing it because I believe it is important that the parliamentary-legislative function of the Newfoundland constitution be physically and procedurally separate from the governmental function. I think it would go a long way towards achieving that by restoring the Legislature to these buildings.

How can we do that? The question arises. Well, first of all I believe that each member of the House of Assembly should be entitled to his or her own office. In the Canadian House of Commons, the Abbott Commission ten years ago decided that each member of Parliament should have 1,000 square feet of space. Most members of Parliament have more than 1,000 square feet of space right now. I think it is fair to say that each member of the House of Assembly should at least be entitled to half that. Where are you going to find the space in the Colonial Building? Well, if you can build a building adjacent to the Confederation Building, why can you not build a building behind this building or adjacent to it which would provide office accommodation for members, committee rooms for members and staff rooms for the administrative support of the House of Assembly. You would restore Parliament to its rightful place, not only physically but, I believe, constitutionally as well. I think it can be done and I think it should be done. I believe very strongly in that, Mr. Chairman, otherwise I would not be here.

The hon. the Deputy Speaker will remember when we held our plenary session of the Parliamentary Conference in Quebec City, one of the things that struck me about the Quebec Legislative Chamber was that there was not enough room in there for the desks for the members. If anybody suggested to the Quebec National Assembly that they move out of that building and build a new Legislature, they would laugh at you.

In the Second World War when the Palace of Westminster was partially destroyed by a German bomb and the House of Commons Chamber itself was destroyed everybody said, "Oh, what a glorious opportunity this is. Now we can build a chamber big enough to accommodate all our members". Churchill, who was Prime Minister said, "No, we will retain the same chamber exactly as it was, (a) for historic reasons and (b) because it provides a better forum for debate and it provides a sense of place for great state occasions because everybody would be there for important debates or important votes or important state occasions".

We all know as legislators that members are not all that attentive to their plenary responsibilities in the House, except when the House is ceremoniously opened, or when there is an important vote, or when there is an important debate. Otherwise members are attending to constituency problems or attending to committee problems. They are everywhere except on the floor of the House. So you are not going to have that many demands on the Legislative Chamber itself and, certainly, you will not have that many public demands on the Legislative Chamber. I do not think the public is all that interested. It should be but it is not. But in terms of public interest and in terms of accommodating the public there is a very good way to accommodate the public, Mr. Chairman, and that is through the medium of radio and television.

Indeed the Newfoundland National Convention broke ground in that respect and I think it was the first legislative forum in the Commonwealth, in the Western World, to have its proceedings broadcast by radio. We could broadcast the proceedings of the House of Assembly here and that would bring the House of Assembly and bring this historic chamber directly to the public of Newfoundland, if the public so decided that they wanted to watch the proceedings via cable television.

Certainly, Mr. Chairman, if the Committee recommends that you are going to require additional space, then I think you should make sure that that space includes accommodation for committees because I think either this Committee or a committee to follow it should recommend that the procedures of the House of Assembly be changed to enhance the role of the Committees of the House. If you are going to do that then you should make provision for the Committees to be telecast. When I say telecast and broadcast, I mean, the press should be left to make the editorial decision as to whether or not a committee is to be broadcast or telecast, not the committee. In terms of the House of Assembly, if it is to be telecast and broadcast it can go the way of the House of Commons by having a gavel to gavel electronic kind of videotape recording or it can have a situation whereby you would have cameras in fixed positions and you would have the media left in the position where they could shoot whatever part of the proceedings they so desired. But either way I think it is important that we bring parliament into the electronic age, into the information age without destroying basic decorum of the institution.

Indeed, I believe that television, certainly in the case of the House of Commons of Canada, has improved decorum considerably, and here I speak as one who initially was opposed to bringing television in the House.

It is rather interesting that the British Government are now in the process of bringing in television into the British House of Commons using the same system that we have devised in Ottawa which, I might add, was also copied by the U.S. House of Representatives.

That gets me to the final point I want to make, Mr. Chairman, that is, emoluments, parliamentary stipends or parliamentary pay or whatever you want to call it. I believe that it is very important to be a member of the House of Assembly. I believe it is very important to be a member of the House of Commons. I believe that your constituents believe a member of the House of Assembly is an important person. Certainly to his or her constituents he or she is important and that is really all that counts.

Are members of the House of Assembly adequately paid? No, I do not believe they are. Are members of the House of Commons adequately paid? Yes, I believe they are well paid. They do not believe that members of the House of Assembly are adequately paid. Having said that, I do not believe that you are going to make any brownie points with either the Government of Newfoundland or the people of Newfoundland if you recommend a big fat pay increase for yourselves. I do not think Members of Parliament or members of Legislatures should be placed in a position where they have to recommend pay increases for themselves. I think that that should be done by some independent tribunal in whom the public would have some confidence.

However, there is one area where I believe you can move, in my humble submission. This view is based on the firm belief that the committee route is the route to go in terms of reforming parliament. I speak of parliament in the global context with the House of Commons and the House of Assembly. If you believe in that, then it is important that you not only give parliamentary committees work or provide them with the independence whereby they can set out their own agenda, but that you improve incentives to do that.

I am always amazed by the propensity in our society to appoint Royal Commissions and task forces outside of Parliament. We have several in Ottawa right now. We have one on broadcasting. I believe the members of that task force receive $400 or $500 a day plus, whatever it is going to cost to provide them with expert staff. We have one on the Unemployment Insurance Act. I believe we have one in Newfoundland on unemployment. I know of that one, maybe, there are others, I do not know. I believe that work could and should be done by members of the House of Commons and Members of the House of Assembly. I think it could be done much better and much more economically, at considerably less cost to the taxpayer. I am sure you were interested to know when you visited Queen's Park that they pay their committee members an extra stipend when the committee sits while the House is not in session. That I believe is reasonable because, after all, if a committee is to sit while other members of the House are able to enjoy the parliamentary recess, that committee should receive extra pay for that because they are doing extra work. Also, I believe it rewards those who do the work because in every Legislature there are always a group of people who go along for the free ride, but I think those who do the work should be rewarded for doing the work.

I do not think it would be unreasonable, Mr. Chairman, for you to recommend that greater emphasis be placed on parliamentary committees and that parliamentary committees be given, in the case of the Ontario Legislature, $60 a day extra to sit while the House is not sitting. Also, of course, central to that would be a strong view that the government should give more work to parliamentary committees while, at the same time, giving parliamentary committees the independence to be self-starting and to be self-sufficient. I believe the public would understand that. I believe, for example, if the Committee of the House of Assembly is to travel, as this one has, across the Province, outside of the country, and work in the Summertime while your peers are able to enjoy being with their constituents or a holiday I think that that should be recognized by some kind of an added emolument. I do not think that is unreasonable.

To sum up, Mr. Chairman, let me say that I believe very strongly, very strongly as a Newfoundlander that we should join with the movement across the Commonwealth in terms of parliamentary reform. I think we can make a good start in the Parliament of Newfoundland, that is a term that has fallen in disuse, but it was our Parliament, we call it the House of Assembly, but it is the Parliament of Newfoundland by providing a greater emphasis on committees; by providing parliamentary committees that are independent of the government and have self-starting powers; by restoring the House of Assembly to its rightful home, to this building which has such a sense of history and place, and which will instill in young Newfoundlanders and sense of pride, as opposed to what we now have which is merely what we now have, which is merely another floor in the Confederation Building; by providing a building adjacent to this buiding where Parliamentary Committees can be accommodated and where Provincial Members of Parliament can have adequate accommodation. A Member of Parliament or a Member of the House of Assembly should be entitled to a private office, where he or she can receive his or her Constituents privately. My God! That is basic, that is the minimum that you should have be entitled to have. I believe that Committees should be rewarded, given more work to do and rewarded for the extra work they do by being given a per diem based on other Legislatures. In terms of this buiding, I do not think it would cost a great deal to restore this building. I was looking up the records, Mr. Chairman, and the last normal Newfoundland Parliament that sat in this Building, I say normal because, in 1932 we were in the Depression and we were going through a crisis in which we had to suspend our Constitution, but in 1928 there were fifty-nine Members of Parliament that sat in this building. There were forty Members of the House of Assembly and there were nineteen Members of the Legislative Council. They did not seem to have an accommodation problem, certainly the acoustics in this room are excellent.

What is even more important, Mr. Chairman, is that you restore to the Newfoundland Parliamentary that sense of dignity, that I believe it has lost; that that sense of place in the constitutional process which I believe it has lost; and, equally important, that it not only seem to be independent of the executive functions of the Government but that it in fact, carve out an independent role for itself by reforming its procedures and by restoring it to its rightful place in this building. I apologize for having rambled. I delilberately avoided having a prepared text because, usually in a prepared text, you either cover too much or you do not cover enough. In any event, I had an informal encounter with the Committee in Ottawa and I merely wanted to enlarge upon the exchange of views we had at that time.

If you want to question me, Mr. Chairman, on any portion of my report, on any of the things I have been able to find out in my travels to other Legislatures or on the very strong emotion feelings I have for this building, I would be glad to respond.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you very much Mr. McGrath. I have a comment I would like to make myself but I am going to forego that now and go into questions. I am sure my colleagues have got some questions and I will reserve mine for last.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, I want to welcome Mr. McGrath here. I want to thank him for his very kind references at the outset to my involvement with the House of Commons Rules and Procedures Committee.

You will permit me to say, I am sure, that while he made reference to that trip to London he did not make any reference to the part of that trip that stands out most for me. That was not my slight accident in itself but the fact that the next morning the first person in the Hospital to see me was Jim's good wife. I mentioned that incident, Mr. Chairman, to lead into what I want to say next, Jim McGrath and his wife, Marg, stand very high in the esteem of everybody who has met them, particularly in the political sphere, of which I can speak of particularly. Indeed, I do not think any man stands higher than Jim McGrath in the esteem of people in Ottawa. His work on the Parliamentary Committee is absolutely landmark, no question about that. We were in Ottawa a week or so ago and the vibes were all good. I do not have to tell you that Jim, I think you know that already. In that context, particularly, Mr. Chairman, I feel particular honoured that Jim has taken the time to come here today. There are so many other things he could be doing but he is here, and we are grateful for that. The temptation is to comment on a number of things that you have said but we have restricted ourselves here, in the interest of getting through our work, to asking questions. I could identify very strongly with what you say about the emphasis on the Committees and so many other things. I will make one comment, again by of preambling to a question.

I find your references to this building an absolutely moving and cogent arguement. I must be candid and I must admit to you that while I have wondered often why we have vacated the place, I had not really focused very seriously on the issue until you first raised it with me and others. Since that time, I have taken a look, again and again at the various angles, both the physical plant that is here, but I also look at it in terms of the separation of the functions that you talked about. I repeat, Mr. Chairman, that what Mr. McGrath says is a powerful arguement. It is also a Pandora's Box from the standpoint of selling it to the people who will make the decision, but the difficulty of the task should not, by itself, frighten us all. I cannot speak for the Committee but I would hope, Mr. Chairman, that we would see fit as a Committee to seize the initiative that the hon. Jim McGrath has handed publicly to us and at least have the courage to have the feasibility of this proposal explored. It makes a lot of sense from the standpoint of history and from the standpoint of the separation of functions. The cost is an issue that is out of my range. I just do not know. I think we owe it to history and we owe it to parliamentary tradition to at least canvas the whole idea.

Which brings me, Mr. Chairman, to my question and the questions for me are going to be few because I think Jim has been very explicit about where he stands on this issue and other issues that he has addressed. Jim, the question in our minds, obviously, comes back to how can we sell this particular idea. Is it an idea that we should debate only or ought we, as a Committee or the House itself, be taking some particular initiatives. I think you alluded to the fact that it is a kind of a now or never proposition, that other decisions are getting made which would move the House from the ninth floor to another location in the Confederation Building. Can you tell us or are you prepared to discuss this in public, the extent of indicating what you think are the chances of having this thoroughly canvassed at least.

MR. McGRATH:
Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice-Chairman. Thank you for your very kind personal references.

Perhaps I could answer your question this way, Mr. Simmons. Tomorrow, I think, is the 2nd. of October. I ran for the House of Assembly in the election of 1956 which was held on October 2nd and I came very close to getting a seat in this place. It was one of the great regrets of my life that I was not successful, although I came within 150 votes of defeating a Cabinet minister. I felt really heartbroken and sickened when we moved out of here, so much so that I seized the first opportunity I had, and that was when I became President of the Progressive Conservative Association of Newfoundland in 1965. I got a resolution through one of our provincial general meetings that a Progressive Conservative Government would restore the House of Assembly to the Colonial Building. That is a matter of record. That is a pretty good start, Mr. Chairman, in terms of impressing upon the powers that be -

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
What year was that?

MR. McGRATH:
That was in 1965. That is a matter of record. It was a convention, I believe, that took place in Gander.

I am not sure on the second point but I believe the resolution was moved a second time as well before the party was elected to form a government in 1971. Political parties sometimes tend to have short memories especially when they are successful at the polls.

As well, Mr. Simmons, I believe it is critically important - and I am very happy to see the media here today - that the people of Newfoundland take an interest in these proceedings, that they take an interest in this building. It is critically important that they take an interest in Newfoundland's Parliament and try and instill a sense of pride in ourselves. My God, we are one of the oldest parliaments of the Commonwealth. We were a Parliament before Canada was a country! Most people forget that. Yet we behalf like a banana republic by keeping on building new legislative chambers. We have one here!

I visited the oldest Parliament in the world which is the Parliament of Iceland and the Parliament of Iceland is housed in a building just like this. It is a member of NATO. It is an independent country. It has all kinds of modern buildings in Reykjavik. It is a very progressive country. It has a higher standard of living than we have and very low unemployment but to suggest to an Icelander that you move the Althing from the Althing Building would be like suggesting to the Roman Catholics that they take the Basilica out of the Basilica Building and move it into the stadium. The analogy is the same. You can accommodate more people in the stadium, but you lose something in the process.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, my next question is partly rhetorical because I am showing my hand on this one. What is the alternative for this building? You know, do you bring in a bulldozer? Suppose that the House is not restored here, what happens to this building? What is its alternate use? What kinds of costs are we dealing with if we assume that we are not going to bring in the bulldozer? We are going to keep it up in some fashion. Do you see another rational use if you heard that the decision was final, that the House of Assembly is going to stay in Confederation Building? Do you see any other use for this building that would address your concerns about history, for example?

MR. McGRATH:
This building was designed to be a parliament building. It was

designed for that purpose. I mean, what can you do with it? You have got this Legislative Chamber. You have got the Upper House next door to it. What do you do with these rooms? You put the Archives in the Legislative Council Chamber, which really is rather pathetic. I mean, surely we can do much better for our provincial Archives than that, in my view.

No, Mr. Simmons, this building was designed to be a parliament building. I do not think it will serve any other function other than a museum.

MR. SIMMONS:
Thank you, Mr. McGrath.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Any other questions?

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman, I have more comments, I think, than questions. I again echo the sentiments of Mr. Simmons with respect to Mr. McGrath's comments on this building being used as our Parliament. I might say that up to this point in time until I discussed it with you, Sir, that I always thought it was an idea of a romanticist. But since I have talked to you and listened to you I am more and more convinced that, for the reasons you have suggested, the historical reasons and for the reason of making a separation between Parliament and the government. I certainly agree with you. You have certainly convinced me of the importance of doing this.

You mentioned the committee system. This is one of the things that has made it very difficult to make any comparisons with respect to salaries in other jurisdictions. I found over the years that other jurisdictions, other provinces in particular, have always used the committee system much more extensively than we have. In fact, we have used it very, very rarely. About the only ongoing committee that we have had over the years is the PAC. Other select committees have been appointed in emergency situations, reacting to crises, this type of thing. We have not used this particular system at all, certainly nothing in comparison with Nova Scotia and nothing in comparison with New Brunswick. I gather that you recommend this strongly as a route that we should go for two reasons, for the more efficient and effective conduct of parliament and also as a procedure for augmenting salary.

MR. McGRATH:
I would recommend very, very strongly that you do it for all the right reasons, as a means of increasing your salaries would be the wrong reason, but as a means of enhancing the role of members of Parliament, that is a very compelling reason. I believe that if you have a strong committee system, then the government would be less inclined to appoint Royal Commissions and task forces. I think you would save money for the people of Newfoundland and you would provide a great deal more emphasis on the role of the Newfoundland parliament than is the case at the present time.

Government has grown too big. The Government of Canada is too big, the Government of Newfoundland is too big, but when you get a big government in a small province you tend to have very few Indians and all Chiefs. You may have a problem there, except that I believe that there should be small committees. I think, for example, a five-member member committee in the Newfoundland House of Assembly could work wonders in terms of carrying out a study on unemployment, or carrying out a study on the impact of offshore development, or carrying out a study on environmental questions, or carrying out a study on the cost of living or whatever, but I believe that putting the emphasis on committees, giving committees is a support system by giving them budgets and staff people - the right to hire expert staff - and paying the members to do the job I think is the way to go.

MR. WOODFORD:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Mr. Woodford.

MR. WOODFORD:
Going back to what Mr. McGrath said about the National Assembly in Quebec, I had the opportunity - I think it was July - to sit in the National Assembly in Quebec. I must say it was something that I will not forget for a while. To get, I think, 122 members of the National Assembly into that building means they are just crammed, there is no room for anything in there yet, everybody is quite happy there. Really, I do not think it is much bigger than this one right here, to be honest about it. There are 122 members sitting there but no mention is ever made about moving anything. I guess I have a comment and then a question with regard to the Standing Committees. They did hold a couple of seminars with regard to their committee structure. Getting back to what we said about the Parliamentary Assistants, they do not let Parliamentary Assistants chair any committee nor sit on committees, but do you agree with some of the powers they have in those committees and the way they are paid? I think they can call any minister in at any time during the year and go at him the same as we do at our estimate committees, on any expenditure over $25,000? Their structure for payment I think is 25 per cent for the chairman, 25 per cent of his salary, 20 per cent for the vice-chairman, and 15 per cent for each member.

That works out to a very substantial amount. I guess we are comparing apples and oranges with regard to the salary in both provinces, but do you agree with the powers they have there, Mr. McGrath, on those Standing Committees?

MR. McGRATH:
Not only do I agree with it but I have recommended in our Special Committee of the House of Commons that we go even further, because the only way that people can hold the government responsible and accountable is through parliament, otherwise it just becomes the kind of a process where you hold them accountable at election time, but during the period between elections, the people hold the government accountable under our system through parliament. Parliament has been given the power to be able to act effectively on behalf of the people. We, for example, have recommended subpoena powers and we have recommended punitive powers. Right now for a committee of the House of Commons, if a witness refuses to appear before a committee, there are two things you can do to him, you can put him in jail indefinitely for the life of Parliament, or you can call him

before the Bar of the House and rap him over the knuckles, but you cannot levy a fine. So we have recommended that you be able to impose a fine on people who refuse to come before committees. We have also recommended that public servants be subject to subpoena, and to be subject to questions by committees without presence of a minister or without having to say, "Well I am sorry but I will have to defer to the minister on that." We believe that bureaucracy has grown so powerful that it is, in fact, accountable to no one, and as a means of holding the bureaucracy accountable, in addition to the ministry, we feel that the bureaucracy should be accountable to Parliament, through Parliament committees. I believe that the case can be made in Newfoundland just as compelling because, certainly, I believe our bureaucracy has blossomed, if that is the word to use, to the same extent it has everywhere.

Incidentally, Mr. Chairman, one of the interesting things about our Legislature is I think we are one of two legislatures in the Commonwealth where the government sits on the left side of the building. The reason for that of course is the fireplace was located on the left side. I was just looking at the old fireplace which reminded me of what is a very interesting Newfoundland tradition and how it arose. The government chose to sit on the warm side of the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
That is why we sit where we sit now.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
Just to persue what you were onto there about committees, without naming names, I can tell you of a recent incident involving a committee of our Legislature where a person was requested to appear before a committee and his response was basically no the first time, and the second time when he had it in writing, "You had better ask my minister." There is a basic misunderstanding of Parliament's role. That individual did not realize that in this context he answered first to the House, not to his minister. That one is not ironed out yet.

I want to put a question to you, if I may. You have referred to your involvement when you were in Opposition and you were on a committee and, now as a government supporter, having been not only on the committee but chairman of the committee, you will know that a government of whatever political stripe can become awfully sensitive about implied criticisms of the way it is doing things.

One of the issues that we have to wrestle with here as an all-party committee, is how you effect change for the better frankly, without getting people's backs up. So my question to you, drawing on your experience both from an Opposition vantage point and a government vantage point, how do you go about that process of building support, building consensus within your caucus for a committee idea?

MR. McGRATH:
First of all, Mr. Simmons, let me respond to you with another anecdote which happens to be a

true story because I was there when it happened. In the last Parliament a government member brought in an amendment to a bill and he did not go through channels with it. A senior bureaucrat sitting behind was overheard to say, "how dare they tamper with my bill." That speaks volumes as to the way that bureaucracy sees parliament.

To answer your question directly, I would say the way to go about it is there has to be an attitudinal change on the part of the leadership of the Province. How do you bring about attitudinal change? You would have to do that by means of public pressure, I believe, by and large. And I believe that we would not have been able to accomplish the reforms that we have accomplished to date without public pressure. For example, all the recommendations of the first report are now incorporated in the Standing Orders of the House. We could not have done that were it not for the fact that we opened up Parliament to the country by the medium of television.

When the people of Canada saw what was going on in the House of Commons, they said, "oh my God, is that what we sent you up there for?" The movement for reform started with the televising of the proceedings of the House. I think they are going to find that that is going to happen in Britain as well. Opening up the House of Assembly to the people of Newfoundland is going to mean that the people of Newfoundland are going to see you, warts and all, and see how you behave, and it is going to influence your behaviour. I think, as a consequence, it is going to be a major catalyst to bring about parliamentary reform.

I think that concomitant with that is the right attitude on the part of the leadership of the Province, the leadership of the Government of Newfoundland has to understand that the Newfoundland Legislature is not a department of government. The Newfoundland Legislature should be responsible for its own affairs. It should be responsible for administering its own budget, which is not the case at the present time. It was not the case in Ottawa up until we brought in the reforms that we did, and now the budget of the House of Commons of Canada, which is $165 million a year, is now administered by a nine-member board consisting of two ministers, the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, and five private members. It used to be four ministers and the Speaker before. The result was that members had no say in controlling the budget of the House, or their own situation. I think that is a major area, Mr. Chairman, where I believe this committee can move.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, I have one final question. I just say to Mr. McGrath in relation to his last comment, that we were impressed with your recommendation on the subject of the Internal Economy Board and impressed at the speed with which Mr. Mulroney and his administration saw fit to give the support needed to have it accepted. We have looked closely at that and will be giving the House our views. We cannot go beyond that without divulging what it is we are going to be saying.

I asked you the question a moment ago about how you build caucus consensus for an issue. I thank you for your answer, but in your answer you really draw attention to the crux of the issue.

Jim McGrath sat in the gallery and he saw the House of Assembly function. He saw the theatre and the substance of the National Convention debates. He looks at that fireplace and he knows the history behind it. Against that, I can quote to you that I was here some years ago with a sitting member of the House, who wondered what that old fireplace was still doing here until I told him the story behind it. That is my point. That the people who will dismiss your idea about the Colonial Building or embrace it, as the case may be, are people who do not have the direct umbilical cord to the issues that make this place live. If somebody, and I think I am looking at the body, somebody has got to make this one come alive for the people who will make the decision and for the public at large. If this one is going to get a fair hearing, this idea of the Colonial Building, and I show my hand here, Mr. Chairman, I think it is a first class idea. I think we would be negligent if we do not provide, at least, the vehicle to have the issue canvassed. I am not saying let us do it, come hell or high water, as it were. There are issues that I would like to hear canvassed on both sides but, if you were to ask for my vote today, I would say, yes, bring her back here now. Bring the House back here for the purpose of redressing the wrong that was started in 1949, as you pointed out to us in Ottawa -

MR. McGRATH:
We perpetuated it.

MR. SIMMONS:
- when the government was put in place, before the Legislature was put in place, after the Commission of Government period. It has been perpetuated and aggravated since then by a number of issues.

MR. McGRATH:
That is a very important point that you made, Mr. Simmons. Mr. Chairman, if you would permit me to interrupt.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. McGrath.

MR. McGRATH:
I think it is critically important as to how we arrive at this point in time. In 1949, instead of convening the Newfoundland House of Assembly first, the Crown appointed a government, which was in place for six months before there was an election held.

MR. SIMMONS:
That is right.

MR. McGRATH:
That kind of put parliament in a rather secondary role in the eyes of the public. That is a very critically important point.

MR. SIMMONS:
That is the point I am coming to, that the public profile on this issue is perhaps lower than it would be in other jurisdictions because the perception that you mentioned that the House is somehow a department of government, somehow the House flows from government, rather than vice-versa, that government flows from the House. It is a widely held perception out there. A lot of people will not identify with the historical argument. They will not indentify with it in terms of basic utility and cost and so on. They will not identify it in terms of the upholding of

parliamentary traditions. So I am saying there is a fairly hefty selling job to be done. I would be prepared to be part of that selling job, but it is going to take voices on all sides. I think one of the first steps is an initiative to put the brakes on what is happening, which de facto will undermine any opportunity of bringing the House back here. To put it more blunty, if the taxpayer goes and renovates the first floor of the Confederation Building, we are not going to turn around next year and start spending more money on this particular building, it is either, or.

MR. McGRATH:
Except, Mr. Simmons, you can bet your bottom dollar that if you move the legislature to another place in the Confederation Building now, in twenty-five years time you will be building another legislature, and it will just go on and on and on. We will have a banana republic kind of approach to it, as opposed to a senior parliamentary democracy approach to it.

MR. SIMMONS:
The issue that comes to mind is the lady in a community on the Northeast Coast, where it was my pleasure to work for a number of years. I went to her house for supper and she was beaming for some reason, I did not know why. Eventually, she said, 'You have not noticed have you?' What I had not noticed was that she had a lovely new chrome set. Of course I said, "How much did you pay for it?" She paid $129 for it. I asked her what happened to the lovely dining room set, the oak table and six chairs, and she sold that for $15. We are in the process of doing the same kind of thing it seems to me.

MR. McGRATH:
I made a comparison with the cathedral or basilica. In fact, the parliament building is very much like a cathedral or a basilica, it has a sense of place, it has to have a sense of decorum, it has to have a sense of history about it. If anybody can find that in the Confederation Building, God bless them. None of these elements at all are present. This place here is alive with history. I am sure you saw the Nova Scotia legislature which is about the same age as this one, not dissimilar to this, the Charlottetown legislature, and together these three, I think, are the oldest parliament buildings in the country.

MR. SIMMONS:
Nova Scotia, Charlottetown and here.

MR. McGRATH:
Yes, and here.

MR. WOODFORD:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Mr. Woodford.

MR. WOODFORD:
Mr. McGrath, you mentioned earlier about what would happen to Members of the House of Assembly if they refused to appear before a committee of the House.

MR. McGRATH:
Not members of the House of Assembly, I am talking about members of the public.

MR. WOODFORD:
What about in the case of a member of the House of Assembly?

MR. McGRATH:
You can only bring a member of the House before a committee if he is cited for contempt or if there is a breach of privilege involved, otherwise he has parliamentary privilege.

MR. WOODFORD:
When he is there, appearing before a Standing Committee of the House, or a Select Committee, can he refuse to answer any question or does he have to answer all?

MR. McGRATH:
Well, it would depend on why he is there. If he is there as a witness, then he should be like everybody else, he should be compelled to answer.

MR. WOODFORD:
As a witness, that is what I am talking about, although he is a member of the House of Assembly, he is still appearing as a witness.

MR. McGRATH:
Well, not only should he be compelled to answer as a witness, but he would still enjoy parliamentary immunity which others would not enjoy, of course, in terms of being able to say anything, notwithstanding the fact that he was a witness before a committee. That is so very unusual that I would have to look up the precedence, but again, I just give you that opinion off the top.

MR. WOODFORD:
It may be another first.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Are there any further questions?

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Lush.

MR. LUSH:
I just want to get back to the committee system once again. The question is rhetorical but I just want to ask the question to make sure that we have consolidated our own view of what Mr. McGrath is saying. I what to make the point again of how, in certain legislatures across Canada, the committee system is not used for the purposes that Mr. McGrath would like to see it used for, the more efficient operation of parliament, but, indeed, it is a way to augment salaries. In two legislatures, I do know, without naming them, members get paid the minute that the committee is struck without ever meeting. I do not think you would agree with this committee system struck in that way or for that purpose.

MR. McGRATH:
That is a clear abuse in my opinion. I think that a member should be paid when the committee is in session and not otherwise. I think, for example, the committee should not be allowed to put itself in session really for the purpose of achieving that end and that goal. I think it should be a clear sitting day. A committee should meet in session and the session would last for not less than an hour and a half normally. In other words a morning session or an afternoon session or an evening session, as the case may be. In the case of Royal Commissioners, there are no guidelines governing Royal Commissioners. The Royal Commission states that a member shall receive X number of dollars a day, period. I know of cases where a member merely comes to the office and makes a telephone call and he qualifies for his stipend

that day. That has happened, but I do not think that that kind of abuse should be allowed into the Parliamentary system because it would be designed merely to reward members who do extra work.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, we have so far confined ourselves to pursuing issues that Mr. McGrath has raised. I wonder would he allow me the liberty of opening another issue. It has to do with his initiative to come before the Committee on a number of occasions during this hearing. It has to do with trips, members' travel. At the moment, as you will be aware, the situation insofar as the House of Assembly is concerned is that a member may get reimbursed for up to twelve trips between St. John's and a designed point in his riding.

Would you be inclined to comment, for the Committee's benefit, on the issue, from your perspective, of the adequacy of twelve trips and also the issue of whether the taxpayers ought to reimburse members for travel outside the district, but within the Province, for example, in the pursuit of his responsibilities as a member?

MR. McGRATH:
Well, that is a little difficult, not having experience as a member of the House of Assembly. I can only give you the House of Commons experience. Currently, we are given the right to travel to our constituencies fifty-two times a year. We have the right to travel anywhere in Canada ten times a year and we have the option of travelling first class. My family or my staff can use any one of those ten tickets to come to the constituency and I utilize that.

In terms of the present context I would suggest to you that that may appear to be adequate. If you were to have a new emphasis on committees and if you were to have a committee sitting for long periods of time during a recess, then a member should be entitled to go back to his constituency from time to time and have his expenses paid without cutting into his regular allotment to cover the plenary session of the House. Again, you just project the same formula to expenses as you would to the per diem.

MR. SIMMONS:
I realize that in part it might be slightly unfair as you have not seen it from this perspective. There are basically two kinds of members here, those who reside in St. John's and those who reside outside St. John's. For the former, the person residing in St. John's may or may not represent an out-of-town riding. If he does, he has, obviously, to get back and forth to the riding on a regular basis. But think of the other guy, the person who lives in Corner Brook, for example, or Deer Lake. The House sits eighteen or twenty weeks and he cannot even get home every weekend on the basis of the present situation.

MR. McGRATH:
I would say, Mr. Simmons, without equivocation, a member should be entitled to go to his or her constituency once a week while the House is in session and should also be entitled to do so when committees are in session. The same should apply.

MR. SIMMONS:
In regard to the ten trips a Member of Parliament gets to travel anywhere in Canada, would you cast that in terms of a rationale. Let me put it to you,

a devil's advocate, why would the member for St. John's East need to use taxpayer's money to go to Winnipeg, for example?

MR. McGRATH:
Because I have a national responsibility as well as a provincial or constituency responsibility. I have the responsibility to the country as a whole. I have the responsibility to understand the country as a whole. In order to address the national issues, I should be conversant with various parts of the country.

MR. SIMMONS:
Could the same argument be extrapolated under the provincial scene?

MR. McGRATH:
That same argument can and should be the same for the Province.

MR. SIMMONS:
Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Mr. McGrath, a number of things that you have raised are new, at least new to the Committee which is why your testimony is so interesting today. There have been a number of people who have appeared before us who have zeroed in on the use or lack of use of the Committee system. I think I am safe in saying that you are the first one to tie it in and associate it with the use of Royal Commissions. I find that extremely interesting. I would just like to ask you a couple of things.

I would like to make an observation and see if you, in thinking it through, which I am sure you have, have rationalized it the way I have. One of the clear justifications for Royal Commissions, as you well know, over the years, usually it is a thorny problem or a sensitive or controversial issue. I think I am safe in saying that governments of all political stripes have been accused of getting it out of the way by giving it to a Royal Commission which, as you very well point out, are extremely costly. All governments, again, tend to justify the appointment of Royal Commissions by pointing out that this issue requires expertise, it requires someone away from the government, so to speak. There is an impression, I suppose, of some independence in terms of brainstorming the issue.

On your suggestion to replace that by the Committee system, would it be fair to me to interpret what you are saying to mean that Royal Commissions, even though they are independent of the government and the Legislature or Parliament, do not always have the expertise, probably rarely do have all the expertise and a large part of the cost is to hire such expertise. So, in your rationalizing this, not only is it a method or a means of giving credence to the Committee system and making more efficient Government's operation, but it is also a savings of money. There would, undoubtly, have to be a savings of money when one looks at some of the costs figures that have been associated with a number of Commissions. A number comes to mind provincially, aside from the nationals. Another area you have mentioned, of course, is -

MR. McGRATH:
May I respond to that first point?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes, sure.

MR. McGRATH:
I do not think there is any doubt that you would save taxpayers money by using Parliamentary Committees instead of Royal Commissions. Probably the first Royal Commission that comes to mind is the Royal Commission on the Ocean Ranger, I think it costed the taxpayers of Canada and the taxpayers of Newfoundland $14,000,000.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Horrendous.

MR. McGRATH:
Mr. Chairman, I do not know it you have thought about this or not but I find it a great paradox that the Ocean Ranger Disaster, which struck this Province so terribly, has been the subject of a United States Congressional Committee within months of it taking place. It was the subject of a United States Coast Guard Committee. It has been the subject of the Royal Commission but it has yet to be the subject of a Parliamentary Committee or a Committee of the Newfoundland House of Assembly. Now, how do you explain that?

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
I think your comments are well taken. What you are saying really is that probably one of the greatest tragedies certainly to hit the Province, and maybe the Country for that matter, has been studied by everyone but -

MR. McGRATH:
But the two Parliaments concerned.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
- the two Parliaments who are charged with the responsiblity of indeed taking initiatives to see that it do not happen again. Let me come back to a major issue that you have laid on us today - this building. I want to tell you a couple of things because I know how strongly you feel about it. I said at the outset you have gone through great inconvenience to come here. I know what your schedule has been in the last little while.

First of all before, I ask the question, I want to say to you that I hope you do not feel alone in terms of the position that you have put forward to us. As Chairman of the Committee, I can share some information with you. I do not doubt for a moment but you were the one to stir the interest because I recall you making a statement to the media long before now. While in Ottawa, a number of your colleagues, picking up on your statement, indicated strongly their support and, in fact, have indicated that they wanted to write us and express their support. I want to tell you as well, while visiting Corner Brook, some weeks ago one gentleman came forward. I did not think it was possible to find someone as strong in their support of the very issue that you raised as that person was. He referred to the building as being used as a warehouse and was appalled at it, and he went into some discussion about moving the Legislature. Picking up on Mr. Simmons' question to you and reflecting on the fact that the Party as you indicated on one occassion, maybe two. Two questions: 1. Is it fair to say that you likened this issue, from a Progressive Conservative Party point of view, to the railway? The Party, as you recall, was strong in it's position on maintaining the Railway. The Government has taken a position on that. The Party, as you indicated, unanimously approved the resolution on this issue. The second question, in relation to it, have you any thoughts as to why there has not been more public statements, more public support, more public commentary on the issue, up to now, given the fact that at least a certain segment of our population, mainly the people who support our Party, were part of that resolution at that time. May I just raise the another point. Would the silence be due to the fact that there was a legislature there, the cost and so on? Maybe this comes back to your point that now is a golden opportunity, given the fact that the existing Legislature is going to be relocated. Would you comment on those?

MR. McGRATH:
First of all, Mr. Simmons, makes a point and he makes it very well, public awareness. I hope I can be proven wrong on this but I would say the average high school student in Newfoundland today would not be aware of our parliamentary history, would not be aware of the history of this building, would not be aware of the fact that this was the seat of Newfoundland's Parliament for many years, for well over 100 years. I believe that Parliament, in terms of public perception, has fallen into disrepute and that is unfortunate.

It seems to me that the location has a role to play. I am not inspired when I sit in the Newfoundland House of Assembly and that is not because of the members who sit there because I have great respect for them. We produce great parliamentarians in this Province, by the way. Your colleague there, the Vice-Chairman, made an outstanding contribution to the House of Commons. Many people disagreed with him but, by George, they listened to him. He had the ear of the House. His predecessor, Don Jamieson, was an outstanding parliamentarian. We have always produced good parliamentarians. Newfoundland has had a small contingent in Ottawa numerically, but we have a voice out of all proportion to our numerical strength because we have an oral tradition in this Province and we produce good parliamentarians. The pity of it is we do not have a stronger Parliament. I believe that we can have a stronger Parliament if we restore Parliament to its proper place in the system and to its proper home in this building. I just feel very strongly about that.

Why the public is not interested, I suppose, is again because the institution of Parliament has fallen into disrepute. I remember an interview with The Evening Telegram in which there was a major typo whereby I said that this was the home of Newfoundland's Parliament for forty-five years. I did not say that but it came out that this was the home of the Newfoundland Parliament for forty-five years. Obviously, it was 145 years or close to it, whatever the figure may be, there abouts. I expected to see letters to the editor correcting me on that outrageous misstatement of fact and there was not one. Yet, you find letters to the editor on just about everything else because, unfortunately, I suspect there is not a great deal of interest in parliament in Newfoundland.

I think that this Committee should sit down when it writes its report and face up to that question. Why is Parliament not more relevant to the life of this Province? I think that question has to be addressed because it is not for the lack of parliamentarians, it is not for the lack of parliamentary talent. We have it in abundance. There is something missing, Mr. Chairman, and this Committee has a golden opportunity to try and figure out what that something is.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you very much, Mr. McGrath. Before you go I just want to make a very brief comment. I want to say, for the benefit of the people who are here from the media, picking up on what you just said, I think the classic example of where our people are in terms of Parliament, not only provincial but federal, I doubt if many people in this Province know, and I would say to the members of the press, to talk to you or to find some way to find out what has been done with your report and how much of it has been adopted by the government and how history has, in fact, been made very recently by the adoption of a number of recommendations in your report, certainly unprecedented in the history of Parliament. That in itself, I think, would make for good reading by our own people.

I want again, as I said at the outset, to thank you for coming, at some inconvenience, and appearing before us. I am sure my colleagues agree with me when I say that without a doubt it has been one of the most interesting sessions. We are indebted to you and thank you very, very much.

MR. McGRATH:
Mr. Chairman, I would like to deposit with the Committee the copy of the new Standing Orders, which incorporates the third report of the Special Committee on Reform which I chaired and a copy of the report itself. Maybe I could just answer your question which I know is rhetorical by this story. There is a young fellow who is trying to get a horse to pull a heavy load up a hill and he was cursing and swearing on the horse and the horse would not move. He was having a hell of a time trying to get him to move. The old fellow was sitting there watching this very quietly. He saw this young fellow pulling at the horse and cursing on him. He went over and said, "You are doing it all wrong my son". He went over and he picked up a stick and he leaned off and he belted the horse across the snout. He said, "First of all you have to get his attention". If you can get the attention of the Newfoundland people, Mr. Chairman, there is no end to what you can do.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Thank you very, very much, Mr. McGrath.

Would the Committee just rise and stretch our legs very quickly and sit again.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Order, please!

Mr. Lundrigan, we welcome you to the Committee. We have had some trouble getting together. It is not your fault or ours it is just one of those things. Our schedule and yours collided a couple of times but we are glad that you have been able to make it and I know that yours is a busy schedule. I am not going to take up any time other than just to say to you very briefly and very generally that we have interpreted our terms of reference in the broadest sense so you can feel comfortable talking to us about just about anything pertaining to the operation of the Legislature and services to members. With those broad terms, you are on.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, before Mr. Lundrigan begins to speak perhaps it is good to remind those of us who may have very, very short memories that in addition to other credentials that Mr. Lundrigan brings here, he has had experience both as a federal politician and a provincial politician having been a member of Parliament and a member of the House of Assembly, also, of course, a member of Cabinet provincially. I just want to say that for the record in case somebody has forgotten.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
You are stealing my thunder. I was going to give his credentials after I heard what he had to say.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
That should disqualify me from any independent opinion that I might have had in giving my credentials, Mr. Chairman, Vice-Chairman.

Thank you for the invitation to come and have a few words. I do not think anybody disagrees with the need for changes in compensation to members. The problem always has been and will continue to be, tomorrow when you make your report or next month whatever the case might be public perception, public awareness and public understanding or consideration for members. It is always a problem and will always continue to be a problem. As a matter of fact, I do not think it has been a bigger problem than it is in 1985 and in recent years. I remember, and I alluded to this particular thing in another session not more than a couple of days ago at which time the Chairman was present, when I got into politics back in '68 - I can maybe say that it was even stronger before '68 - public perception of the political process was quite different than it is today. It was considered a tremendous honour to be associated with the political process and it seemed to me that politics and the whole business of government seemed to have a higher ranking in the public mind, consequently, for reasons that I am not aware of and am not wise enough to be able to refer to, it seems to me today that people are generally disaffected from or disillusioned with or turned off, to use the in phrase, with the whole system. It makes it much more difficult, therefore for members to command attention in the public mind if they want consideration for legitimate concerns like salaries and like other benefits, or like services that they might require.

Also, there is a cynicism that I have never seen quite like it before. I am sure if we had people who are older than I am talk about older times they might say things were like that once before, or many times. They might very well say that. But there seems to be a deep cynicism where people figure that the parliamentarian or the member of government is ripping off the system and getting away with all kinds of things. You hear comments that would really shock you! Only about two days ago I was sitting in a session with a number of ordinary Newfoundlanders, as a former colleague used to call them, and one fellow said, "I wonder when we are going to get something going in this Province? It has never been as bad." And I said, "Yes, it is a little bit rough pretty well all over." He said, "If we could get rid of all of the corruption and graft that is going on I think we can get this place going again." I said, "Is that not an interesting comment." I did not try to defend or make any comment, I knew it was a waste of time, it would take a twenty year history lesson or perhaps an educational process to change the opinion of that one individual.

It is not an uncommon thing to have people allude to and reflect and refer to the political process in derogatory terms. I do not quite understand it. I think it is a reflection of the economic times we are living in. When times are buoyant and things are in abundance I think people are much more likely to be generous in their attitudes. When times are tough, as they are today, they are much more likely to be less generous in their attitudes.

The first thing I would say, Mr. Chairman, is your Committee is going to have less likelihood of having a creditable acceptance of your report, bearing in mind you are parliamentarians yourselves. I would have hoped that you would have had a member or two on your Committee who were not elected members and you might very well have. I only am aware of the parliamentarians on your Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
It is a select committee.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
A select committee of the House. I remember back in 1970 I believe it was when the Prime Minister of the day, Mr. Trudeau, appointed a Committee from outside the House who were people of various ranks in society, business people, ordinary citizens of the community, who did a report. When they investigated the circumstances they were shocked to find the problems that parliamentarians had, but they were looking at it from a vantage point of the Canadian public rather than from the vantage point of persons with an interest in the outcome, which you people have. That is not to reflect negatively on your situation. I that case I remember the Prime Minister of the day taking a very strong stand and giving a dramatic increase to members of Parliament, and being the type of person he was he came under some flak and he said, "If you do not like the people I am saying that the job is worth this. If you do not like the persons you have there, if you do not think they are worth the money, get someone who are worth the money. Do not tell me the job is not worth the money. You might be telling me your member is not worth the money, that is a different question."

I remember one of my funny stories that I believe I might have told you before was Mr. Stanfield taking a decisive stand. We got on his back in caucus to support the Prime Minister. He came out nationally that day and said his position was "maybe yes or maybe no." Of course, that is as decisive as he would be on a question of that nature, because he knew that the Opposition did not have the obligation to provide leadership in bringing in salary increases. Governments usually suffer if the move is a negative one. The Prime Minister of that day was bold enough to do it and he did. Of course, as I say, they found no lack of support from all colleagues.

It is a difficult thing to do to bring in changes to compensation for members because if you get a person from Leading Tickles or from Grates Cove or from any other community trying to scrape through on $5,000 or $6,000 a year, on the verge of poverty, or even $15,000 or $20,000 a year which is still on the verge of poverty, then it is difficult to understand why a person making $30,000 or $40,000 or $50,000 is not doing well.

Having been out of the system for a few years I understand why people making $50,000 or $60,000 or $70,000 might not be doing well, if they are in particular types of work where the cost of their enterprise is high. That is one of the problems you have as members. My experience as a former member was that the salary of a member of the Legislature basically as it stands today would be enough for him or her to use for ongoing expenses. Certainly nobody can depend on the salaries that the members are getting today as their salary. If it were such that the salary that one gets would not be interefered with in terms of the demands on that salary, in any other way other than the food and the clothing and the shelter that one needs, then the salary is not as abysmal as it appears. But certainly, in that sense, the salaries that members get is still abysmal .

My experience was that there is no way to cover a tremendous number of the costs that are involved in being an elected member. I was in Corner Brook this weekend to a political partisan function. I found myself, and I am sure there are elected members did as well, spending a tremendous number of dollars here a $5, and a $10, and a $20 bill here and there. There was a fortune in money spent with no way in the world to recover it, even as a businessman. As a member, obviously, there is no way to recover your costs because it would be a partisan function and, consequently, you would have to do it. My experience as an elected member showed almost any given week there was a requirement for a member to be engaged in situations where there are added costs that are not compensated for.

I have identified, in a general way, about five different recommendations that I think, if one could act independent of the public, which is not possible, one might be able to bring in, but I think some of them can be acted on, even with the public cynicism that exist today. First, it is the salary. There is no easy way to raise salaries. I do not think you are going to be able to raise the salaries to the levels that are deserved by members without incurring the wrath of the whole public and also, I think, government would not accept a move which would be dramatically different than basically exists in the system we have today.

I am going to suggest that we have to have a dramatic increase in salary, but I do not expect that you can make the compensation adequate for what it should be in 1985. I do not think the recommendation would be accepted if you were to go that route. I have heard people quote $50,000. Elected members of the Legislature, assuming that their roles can be structured so that they can apply themselves in a fairly full-time manner to their work and not as a part-time effort, should be paid executive salaries. If they are responsible for administering the highest executive roles in the Province, then they should be compensated at executive levels. If you appoint a judge, if you appoint anybody in the system today, deputy ministers and the like, you have to pay them executive salaries. In our Province the disadvantage is that in executive positions in government you cannot pay salaries high enough to attract competent people. One of the problems that Newfoundlanders suffers from all the way through is we cannot attract competent people into the system even with what we call executive salaries.

If you pay $50,000 or $60,000 or $70,000 a year to a person to run Fisheries Products, to be a deputy minister or whatever the case might be - to administer any major area, like the offshore - certainly the people who were the bosses and who are responsible for making the laws and regulations, raising the taxes and administering $2 billion worth of money should be paid salaries in that range. That is the minimum that should happen.

As a matter of fact, if you are standing elbow to elbow with a person making $50,000 or $60,000 or $70,000 a year and you are making $20,000 or $25,000 or $30,000, it does not add up, it does not make any sense. Something is wrong with that kind of a system. Over the years what has happened in an effort to satisfy the public expectation that members be an example in restraint, salaries in this Province for MHAs has been neglected all the way through. No one has had the courage to really face up to it. I am going to suggest that no matter what you bring in, if it is a $1 a day increase, you are not going to get the public acceptance. If it is a $10,000 a year increase or a $20,000 a year increase, you are still going to have the same response. What it requires is the courage to recognize that MHAs are grossly underpaid in the Province and if the trend continues it means that you are just not going to get the people to run. You have people who will run. You will always get competition for the job but you certainly will not attract people who should be in the political process.

I am going to recommend several other areas which I think are ways that the government and Parliament can make moves which might be able to compensate for the major problem, that is that MHAs salaries are not their own money. I think there should be a provision in the compensation package for MHAs which allows MHAs to have office accommodations in their ridings or a budgetary arrangement that can enable them to have that. Perhaps I am a step ahead of myself here by not talking about the general observation first. I think the whole process of remuneration, every aspect of it, should be administered by the independent office of the Speaker of the Legislature. I think it is a mistake for governments to have situations of any shape, size or form that can, in fact, be controlled by government, whichever government is in power. The major compensation for members, except for parliamentary jobs such as parliamentary assistants or something of that nature which, obviously, has to be determined by the government, should be administered by the Speaker.

If there is any major move made by

this Committee it should be to recommend that there be a branch of the Speaker's office that involves the whole compensation package, headed by a person or persons answerable to the Speaker and, therefore, Parliament and that person or persons should be given the designation of having a budget and necessary staff to deal with members. I am not going to go beyond saying just that. I think all the members and anybody in the public who understands the system recognizes that it enables members of Parliament to be independent people and not beholding to anybody. I think that is a vital part of the democratic process. I am sure if Jim McGrath were here, he would maybe allude to and make reference to the same thing.

Therefore, I am saying that there be arrangements made where members can have accommodations in their ridings if they need it. I am not suggesting that there be $20,000 or $30,000 or $40,000 or $50,000 or any large number of dollars assigned for offices. I do not think MHAs, by and large, need offices in their ridings. I am suggesting through that if Roger Simmons is on his way down to the South Coast and he wants to sit down in a region of that riding of his for a week and do his work that he should be able to be provided with the accommodations required. I do not think he should have to be operating out of his hotel room or his boarding house or up in some location which is inadequate. His constituents should have proper access to him or her as members of the government. They should be able to be compensated for that according to the costs involved. I am definitely suggesting that there be arrangements made when members visit their ridings so they can be allowed office accommodations.

I am suggesting, number three, salary - office, that members have a per diem arrangement when they are visiting their districts. If somebody is to go to Green Bay today or to White Bay today or to any other area of the Province and they are carrying on their parliamentary work, they should be paid a per diem arrangement over and above any cost that is incurred. I do not think that MHAs should be limited to one visit or two visits or three visits. I think it should be at the integrity of the individual member. In the event that the Speaker administering the programme determines that there is an abuse there should be some kind of a reporting system or a system where semi-annually or annually the Speaker can make it available or known the extent to which members have visited their ridings and the compensation.

If a person who is really compensated for three or four months work a year wants to take a week or any number of days and visit the riding and do parliamentary work and it is legitimate parliamentary work or government work or constituency work, development work or anything of that nature, then I think the individual should be paid under a per diem arrangement, over and above the regular salary. I think that is something that members of the public will understand and accept. If I am getting paid for three or four months work a year, which is essentially what your salaries reflect, and most members of the public think that is all that members do anyway, and you are going to take time to go down on the Coast of Labrador and spend a week or a month, then you certainly cannot be expected to pay your costs and also to take time away from any other supplementary work you are doing. You should be compensated for it. I believe that that is one way where members could get some public acceptance and also reinforce and supplement the legitimate requirement for a decent return for effort.

In the expense category, I think there are two areas that I would like to reflect on. Number one, and I did say it, when I was in the political process myself, I found that there was no way to keep up with the expenses. That, to me, was the most damaging part of the entire job. If you go to any community and you pop into a restaurant or a social event, people expect you to do all kinds of things. If they ask you for a donation for the local fire brigade you cannot give two dollars, you cannot give five dollars. There has got to be a decent effort made. If you sit down at a table and the bill comes to $300 or $200 as members, particularly backbenchers, you have an obligation to respect your constituents. Most constituents, 95 per cent of the public think that is all covered by some arrangement somewhere that you already have. I think it is really important and it is absolutely ludicrous that it is not already in place where there be a minimum amount of expenses allocated for members, which need not be pre-arranged, so MHAs can have an expense arrangement when they go to their ridings.

I also think there should be a special fund set up where, if in the event that MHAs are visiting an area, doing official business, they can apply to the Speaker's office for expenses which are anticipated and legitimate. If Mr. Hickey wants to take out a council in his riding to a dinner meeting because he is discussing the events in that area and he wants to be responsible for that dinner, then he should be able to apply to the Speaker's office and get a prior arrangement for compensation for that. I am saying if there is a legitimate, heavy expense, beyond a couple of hundred dollars a day or a trip, then that arrangement should be there and it should be budgeted for. I have frequently found myself in situations where I was picking up large expenses, and I often did it, when there was no way I could get covered at all. If you go to areas where you are meeting development groups, councils, and organized groups, where there are requirements for you to cover costs of expenses so incurred, then you should be able to make prior arrangements and have that covered. The public expect that, it is a genuine public expense. It is not your expense, and, I believe that that should be available to an MHA. I think these are some of the reasons why members involved in the government process do not have the public image they should have because they have not got the wherewithal. If anyone has any concern about it there should be an administrative reporting system which, in fact, can compensate or can enable the Speaker's office and the public to be aware of whatever the extent of expenses have been so that the MHA is responsible for defending whatever the case might be.

My final recommendation is this, and something I have thought about for quite some time. It does not make any sense to me that members elected to be in governmental positions are not full-time people involved in the full-time process of government. I have never understood why it has not been able to be worked out so that if a person is elected to represent the district of Gander, the district of Exploits, or whatever, that that individual does not have a full-time role. Under the present arrangements it appears that most members do not have a full-time role, unless it is a role involving people like yourself who are designated for a specific task at the moment. We have a limited number of people involved in the process. We have, I think, about fifty-two members, and certainly there must be a way where each of these members can be fully involved. What I am suggesting here is that there are specific duties that governments need frequently. The most expert people should be the elected members in many cases because, frequently, there are political roles that need to be undertaken, development roles involving resources and the like. I believe it should be possible to designate an arrangement where MHAs, if they are so required to carry on responsibilites, be compensated for it.

I remember Mr. Brett, who carried on the responsibility of the consumer report. I am not sure what he did, how he did it, how good it was, or how bad it was. The public can always judge that, if it good, bad, or indifferent. If a person works at it and does a good job then, obviously, they are going to get public kudos but I do not think he should be expected to do these things without compensation. If you went out to get anybody in a consulting area, a lawyer, an engineer, or anybody to do it - frequently representatives might not be qualified to do some of these jobs - then they would be heavily compensated. There is no reason why members of the legislature could not be compensated as well.

So I am suggesting, that in looking at your report, if you want public acceptance I think you are going to have trouble getting proper salaries for MHAs. I do not think it will fly with the public today, particularly with the climate that we have, but I do think MHAs should be compensated at executive levels. I am suggesting that there should be arrangements made where office accommodations, not full-time office arrangements but accommodations on a temporary basis should be able to be covered by a compensation package. I am suggesting a per diem arrangement. When persons are in a riding, they should be compensated over and above their expenses on a per diem basis. I am suggesting in the expenses there be am automatic minimum amount that can be covered by MHAs and special arrangements when the need requires. And I do believe that there should be an administrative process set up that can require MHAs or the Speaker's office to report on each MHAs activities so that it can be scrutinized. I am suggesting that a special duties designation be arranged so that when MHAs are required to do activities they, in fact, are compensated for them.

In my final couple of remarks, I want to support comments made by Jim McGrath and by other people. Senator Bill Doody has not appeared before the committee but

I know his views are very strong on having some symbolic move made to try and resurrect a level of enthusiasm and respectability for the legislative process. I think one of the symbolic moves would be to get this building here restored and maybe even enlarged in some way. Obviously, I am not a architect. I could not tell you what you could do to make this accommodate the suggestion. But even if there were a committee, an individual, an architect, or a person designated to look at it, I think it would be worthwhile before any decision were made to go beyond what we have today. I hated that bloody building up there when I was in it. I just could not stand it. It is a disaster as a legislature. You are stuck into a bin and that is exactly the impression you get. I do not like it and I did not like it then and now, all the way through when I was a student of the political process and when I was a participant. I think it downgrades the parliamentary process. I also think that if we are going to move from it to another really elaborate expensive structure it might very well result in a lot of unfavorable public reaction. I think this place is part of the roots of Newfoundland and Labrador and I believe that the public of the Province would gain a different perspective on it all. So I think that is a suggestion which goes beyond what appears to be the surface magnitude of the suggestion. I think it is worthwhile looking at it. If there is already a decision made counter to the one that we are suggesting here, well, then that is it. But I think it would be a mistake not to at least stand back from it and have a peek at it.

My last observation is the business of the number of MHAs representing the Province. There was an increase of - was it, Mr. Hickey? - from thirty-six to fifty two?

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Yes.

MR. SIMMONS:
First from thirty-six and then to forty-three.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Then forty-three to fifty-two.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
I have my doubts about that. I really do. I am not suggesting that we have a lay off in the House of Assembly but I personally believe that to have a dozen members representing the City of St. John's is really not sensible. I believe that we have too many MHAs. I think we had enough. I might even have been part of the group who enlarged it to fifty-two or whatever. But standing back, as an independent observer right now, I would have to say if one wants to keep the compensation package within certain financial bounds, it might not be a bad idea to think in terms of having a restructuring of the number of seats in the Province. I would not want to spend $10 million trying to figure out how to restructure it, but it seems to me that we have too many MHAs and the more people you get, the less important the role seems to be. People can be walking over each other.

As far as administering the area, I can understand people saying we have got so many communities that are so spread out but it depends on what role one wants to achieve. If one wants to be totally a service person, a social person for his riding or a welfare person for his riding or her riding, then you need many more members. But if one wants to assume the role of being a person who can help legislate, which is the primary role, to help with financial matters which is the taxation and spending of the dollars that the public get and provide some kind of a broad leadership role for the area, which is what a parliamentary person should be doing, then I think the size of the riding is not as important.

Nobody will never be able to be so equipped and so competent and so well staffed to satisfy the needs of every individual family in every part of every district, although many of our members, including the members at this table I know for a fact, try to do that. It is almost an impossible role, so difficult that it is the most thankless job in the world. But I think in doing that frequently members lose site of their major responsibility and that is to stand back from this little old Province that we are living in and see what broad, broad areas of important economic activity, financial activity and policy activity we can get ourselves involved in.

That is what really bored me with our own legislative process. I found, to a large extent, we were and I was - maybe I should just talk about myself - frequently bogged down in so much detail, all important - everyone's family problems are the most important to them - that I frequently lost site of my obligation, that was to try to govern our Province and to try to provide the proper climate for investment and to try to provide a proper relationship between ourselves and others in the remote part of the world. We are a remote region, almost uninhabited, 600,000 on 150,000 square miles of land, and an area that very few people know anything about. Those who do know frequently do not have a good attitude towards us.

So our role was basically to provide a correct climate and also to promote our Province in the world we are living in today. I found we did not do that. I am suggesting that if we need people to do that we do not need, for this Province, fifty-two. I do not believe we do, any more than we need five Premiers. Maybe we do not need ten provinces in Canada either but that is another philosophical question.

The fact of the matter is I think if there were a crunch as to the compensation package and there were a very serious effort and not a short term small move, then it might very well be considered that we look at the number of members and try to be more realistic about it.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Thank you very much, Mr. Lundrigan. Before I go to my colleagues there are a couple of things I want to just raise before I forget them. I am afraid I will forget them.

You have all but said it but I would just like confirmation . Some of your comments have been rather provocative. That is why we are here. You feel that fifty-two is too many and that has been said before, by the way. I just want to say to you other people have said that to us. Am I accurate in reading into what you are saying, based on the fact that you said that the need for a much larger or a substantial increase in salary, but the justification for it and the need for it has the problem of it flying with the public. Then you raised the matter of the fifty-two. Are you rationalizing the two areas and saying a much improved compensation package - a substantial increase for members - requires a broader role for their operation as members, and one justifying the other. In other words, reduce the numbers, enrich the package. Is that what is coming through?

MR. LUNDRIGAN

I really do not want to tie it together because I think that it would be impossible to achieve the latter in any reasonable time frame. I may be making that as an observation in the same vein as I am talking about this building. It is a longer term thing. I think somewhere along the way, in the next three or four years, it might be advisable that there be a review made of the number of MHAs that we have. But I certainly would not think or expect that the package of compensation or services that we are talking about should be delayed any longer than a number of weeks.

What I am suggesting is that you get on with the business of providing a better package, but, in the same vein, I think, there should be some commitment made or there could be some commitment made to try and attract and to make moves along the lines we are talking about. For example, it might cost us a lot of millions to build a new building, which I think we need. You might be able to do this building at much less cost, therefore, it tends to offset what might be a bigger cost in building a new building. In terms of compensation, I do not think we can say right now we are only going to pay forty-two members this Fall and we will leave ten out. That would be ludicrous, no one would expect that. I do not expect we would have forty-two members even as early as the next election or maybe we could. I tend to think it might be a general aim that should be worked on, so that the public can understand that, in fact, we are willing and government is willing to try and keep the cost of government as low as possible and, maybe, even as low as it is today. One of the ways might be to just reduce the number of members. I would like someone to ask me which members and which areas.

MR. SIMMONS:

You must have a list.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):

I have one more question.

As you know the Committee makes its own rules. One of the rules we made at the beginning is that we would not challenge any issue that came before us. We are here to listen and we would confine ourselves to raising questions to have the person elucidate, if necessary, any points that they have made.

As you know, there is a statute called The Electoral Boundaries Act. Now that statute, however, does not empower the commissioner or commissioners who are appointed. They are appointed every five years, I believe. They were just appointed there about a year and a half ago. They deal with the boundaries of the various constituencies, but not necessarily the number. Picking up on that, have you any magic number off the top of your head?

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
I do not have a magic number and I am hesitant to make this the point.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
If it were to come to pass?

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
I would not have raised it at all if I thought this would be a point that would detract from what I am really saying which is that we need a healthier compensation package for people in the political process. But I would think that the number we had before was a legitimate number.

MR. SIMMONS:
Forty-two.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Forty-three.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
Something like that, in that range. Twenty per cent less than we have today might be a good number. But I have not thought it through.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
You will remember there was forty-one and a dual riding, Harbour Main - Bell Island, which had two, forty-three.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
I think we could do with less members, and I have not thought it through beyond that. But I did not see anything wrong with what we had before, to be honest with you.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes. In other words, what you are saying you probably would not have changed it from forty-three or somewheres around there.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
There are various parts of the world where they would have a substantial reduction and leave it at perhaps only one. But I think we are too big for that. So somewhere between one and fifty-two. Seriously, I have not thought it through, to be honest with you.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The hon. member for Bansvista North.

MR. LUSH:
I was just going to comment on this idea of the Electoral Commission or whatever its terminology is.

MR. SIMMONS:
The Electoral Boundaries Commission.

MR. LUSH:
The Electoral Boundaries Commission.

I almost get the impression that whenever that is set up their mandate is to increase rather than, you know, every time you hear they are going to be kicked into gear you almost get the feeling that we are going to get more members.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
No, the act specifies fifty-two. There is nothing embodied in setting up a commission to empower the commissioners to change the numbers because I appeared before the last commission and we were brainstorming a number of bouindaries -

MR. LUSH:
No, I am just saying that is a

perception, that that is going to be their recommendation.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Yes. But it is fixed at fifty-two. The commissioners, although appointed every five years, cannot change that.

Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
On that point the federal enabling legislation is tied to a formula which is based on no decrease in the Quebec representation, which means, as long as the Quebec population is stagnant or decreasing, the overall numbers of the House will go up as other parts of the country grow. So every time they bring in a report there is more members. In our case, the statute that we put through the House around 1976 or 1977 fixed the number at fifty-two.

It is not often, Sir, I disagree with you publicly, but I submit the number was forty plus Harbour Main, rather than forty-one. I had the understanding that we had forty-two seats at the time.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
No, no. It was forty-three, forty-two plus the Speaker.

MR. SIMMONS:
On that issue, well we disagree.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
There were thirty-nine and three.

MR. SIMMONS:
We disagree.

On the issue of the number of MHAs, I do not want to be partisan but I cannot risk the chance to have some fun. Both John Lundrigan and Tom Hickey cast their votes in favour of increasing it to fifty-two, and John has already said that.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
That was when I had to go along with the system.

MR. SIMMONS:
They were supporting administrative initiative.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
I will not rule you out of order, Mr. Simmons.

MR. SIMMONS:
They were supporting an administrative initiative at the time.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
I will be very tolerant, but you are being provocative. I should not allow you to harass my former colleague.

MR. SIMMONS:
At the same time I voted against that initiative and in retrospect, of course, I think it would have been wise to keep the number about forty or forty-two.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
I was not in the House when that was voted on. That was before 1975.

MR. SIMMONS:
I think you are right. Yes.

MR. LUSH:
We came at the same time, we came in with fifty-two.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
I think I would have said then basically what I am saying now. I do not think I was very shy about saying what was on my mind.

MR. SIMMONS:
I preamble, I was having fun. I

was not trying to make any -

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
I do not think I voted for it. I would vote for an increase in Newfoundland's representation in the House of Commons because one of the problems here is that we are an entity, but we have not got any clout. We have no clout and we do not need any more than seven members from a point of view of providing service, it is a matter of the clout that you get in the system. But here it is a different question.

MR. SIMMONS:
Way off the subject but just on what you said, I have always been amazed at people who argue the point you just argued and I argue it too that we are an entity but we do not have clout. I am amazed that they have not raised the precedent insofar, for example, as PEI and New Brunswick are concerned because back eons of time, it was decreed that PEI should have four senators, they can never have fewer MPs than the number of senators, they are going to have four MPs, four MPs for 100,000 people and we have seven for almost 600,000 people. It seems to me if that kind of a special provision was made for that small entity, somebody ought to have applied it somehow to our situation to give us -

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
There have been great arguments made. I remember getting involved with the late Justice Puddister and got into terrible trouble fighting for some of these causes, but I think it is a lost cause.

MR. SIMMONS:
Back to our assignment here. Let me raise questions about the matters you have put today and I wanted to start by thanking you for coming John. Your grasp of the issue is not surprising but it is very refreshing to hear. You have come very quickly to the heart of the matter that we are wrestling with and you have zeroed in correctly on some of the dilemmas we face. One of them is the credibility of recommendations which we make, given our obvious vested interest in the matters that we are addressing. This brings me to the first dilemma that I want to raise with you. We have an obligation to the House to address these matters. We could, I suppose, be puritanical and go back and say, "Look, it is not proper for us to do this but we must presume that the people who gave us the assignment in the first place knew its inpropriety when they gave it to us." In pragmatic terms, if we go back and refuse to make recommendations on matters related to remuneration, then it puts the thing on ice for another two or three years and increases the difficulty of ever getting any kind of wage parity, if you like.

So that is our dilemma. The way I see we can handle it, and I want your comment, is to accept the impurity of what we are up to and proceed to make a recommendation addressing this timeframe only and then to make a further recommendation that this will never happen again, that it will be put in the hands of an independent commission as they do in Nova Scotia, as they do in Ottawa. Was that the drift of what you were saying in effect?

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
Yes. I think it is very difficult for the people around this table to make a report that has credibility when you are your own

judges, you are judging yourselves. I think that is a difficult situation to find yourselves in and I am saying to you as a committee of the Legislature, and I might even say the same thing to an independent committee, that in order for you to get justice here, you might have to find ways and means to achieve your ends without going the salary route. I think that if you analyze the problem, the problem is compensation, it is not salary, it is the total package of services and compensation. It is not directly salary. Therefore, the burden of what I want to say is that you build in circumstances into your package which basically gives you the ability as legislators to receive some level of parity, without building into the salary.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Chairman, I have some other questions. The Colonial Building issue in your absence, or before you arrived, Jim McGrath had indicated that the solution to the question of space for staff support and MHAs would be a separate building behind here, probably connected by a tunnel or a surface corridor, or something. My point is this, do you think the proposal to return here with maybe the addition of another structure, is a saleable proposition in the present time to the government of the day and saleable to the public.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
I think anything that would restore some of the pride that we have lost in this Province today would be positive. Every time there is an absorption of a community like Newfoundland and Labrador by a larger entity, there is a tremendous dilution of its culture, its whole heritage, its history, you name it. Anything that could help restore that in part I think would be a very positive thing. If you notice in all the countries of the world today that tend to be looking for reclamation of some of their own form of glory, and if you look at some of the African countries, the first thing they do is try to restore some of the traditional things that were part of their original system. I do not think we ever hope that we are going to be such as we were in the past. We are a part of Canada and I think most people are proud of that, but this thing here is an essence of the history of Newfoundland. It is the core of the emergence of our democratic system. It is perhaps the most historical building in Canada from a government point of view. There is no doubt in my mind about that.

Mr. Stanfield was down here and he was trying to coax us up a little bit to be less patriotic and a little more magnanimous about the country we are living in, and I said "what you have to understand is that you fellows were chasing buffalos in other parts of the country when we had civilization going." That is true. A large part of the civilization was what is going on here in this building. I mean the people at this table and the people in the building know the history of what happened in this Province. We were the founders of the democratic process in Canada and it happened, by and large, in this building. If there is a willingness to do it, there can be all kinds of glorious reasons given. If there is no reason to give it, the reason we cannot do it is multi-fold. But I do not see any reason it cannot be done. It is not a big thing, it makes a little bit of political will. I think the public would be ecstatic about it. I think the public who have engaged with this process here in this city would be particularly ecstatic about it.

MR. SIMMONS:
I must say, Mr. Chairman, as I walk around I get more and more enamored of the idea. It is a beautiful setting.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
That is why I got in politics because I came here a few times when I was kicking around, having come from Island Cove, which is not the seat of government exactly. I managed to find my way down here and poke my nose around a little bit, as some of the members of the media have done often enough over the years. I saw this great thing going on here, this great debate. This was the seat of the greatest debates that will ever take place. We will never have anything like it again, despite the fact that we might, in our own minds, think that we can handle ourselves on our feet and that. This was where it all was carved out. I poked my nose around here and I got a great enthusiasm for the whole system and I had great admiration for people who were engaged in it, of all political strifes. I think it would restore a lot of that now.

MR. SIMMONS:
Apropos what you have just said, Jim McGrath made a point which bears repetition. He reminded us of something that I had forgotten, despite the fact that I am somewhat a student of history. He reminded us that were were one of the first five dominions in the Statute of Westminster together with New Zealand, Australia -

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
He knows his history better than I do.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Before Canada.

MR. SIMMONS:
No, no. But the five dominions in the Statute of Westminster, 1932, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland. We were one of the first five named dominions when we acquired dominion status.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Plus he said that we had the democractic form of government as a country.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
Before Canada.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Before Canada.

MR. SIMMONS:
Of course, 1832.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
Newfoundland is a small part of the world and a very small population but it was always looked on by the Commonwealth and by the world as a very strategic location for a whole variety of reasons. The most important reason was the economic factor, the trade and the potential resources that we had and are still here.

MR. SIMMONS:
I have two other questions. One gets us off the philosophic and historic plane down to the nitty gritty. It is not something that you directly addressed but would you care to give the Committee your views on the adequacy of the present office arrangement where two members share an office of

about ten by twelve, of about 100 to 120 square feet and we share a secretary. Would you want to give us any comment on the question of support services and the staff support?

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
I think that is an important question, Mr. Simmons, because if you are going to treat MHAs in the way that they are being treated today by virtue of the office accommodations, as one example, the public attitude is pretty well what you would expect to receive. In all industries everywhere where they have executive people doing work, the first priority is to provide decent office accommodations. In lots of cases - I remember being a student of administration once upon a time - the kinds of little things that are big things in trying to promote the images of the people in the corporate sector, particularly in line positions, are so important to them. I am not going to suggest that MHAs be conscious of how many windows they have or how many paintings they have or who painted which painting, but the public expects the people governing their territory to have good accommodations. The public expects that. If you are going to be stuck in little two by four corners sharing a wastepaper basket, with no confidentiality, how can we expect the public, first of all, to be able to legitimately engage with them which is the primary reason for good accommodations and secondly, to have any respect for them?

So the answer is an obvious answer and you knew what my response would be. We have got have better accommodations. It is embarrassing. I moved out from being a minister which is the only role I played for about four years and I had it right at my fingertips, I am a minister, everything tiptop. I had what I wanted to have, what I needed or wanted and so did my senior staff. I moved out to becoming an MHA when I got into a little bit of fuss and threw the towel in on it, if you recall. I found myself sitting in an area with ten or twelve fellows occupying about as much space as I had for my own office the day before. Now that is ludicrous. As a matter of fact I just gave up the ghost and moved out. I never did go near the place.

MR. SIMMONS:
One final question and, John, I preamble this by saying that my interest here is not to pry unduly but I suspect something. I just wanted to put the question to you about the reason you left politics in this context. Would you indicate to the Committee whether it had anything to do with income? Was that a consideration for you in deciding to change careers at that point in time? I do not have to tell the Committee or you that you had the perception, at least, my perception and the public perception, was that you still had quite a contribution to make and a fairly good future in elected politics. You choose, at a time when you were highly regarded in the Province, had a good political profile, to change gears and get into business. Now, I am not prying. I am just saying, can you tell the Committee whether any part of that decision involved income reasons?

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
I can answer your question quite clearly by avoiding it in total.

I will just say this, that my fundamental conclusion was after ten years elected that a person today should be independent of the salary in order to go into politics. I did not leave politics primarily because of any compensation, but I did conclude all the way through that it is an impossible role today because of the compensation for people who are not independently well off. I can almost give you another dimension to my answer which would leave you guessing, that is, that if one ever reaches the stage where one is independent enough one should consider politics.

MR. SIMMONS:
Let me interrupt you here. Are you advocating though -

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
So perhaps you can guess a little bit of what I am talking about.

MR. SIMMONS:
I hear what you are saying. But just for the record, are you saying, a la John Carter, that one ought to be independently wealthy to seek elective office or that in the present circumstances, you better be?

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
No, I am saying the opposite. I spent an interesting weekend with Don Mazankowski last weekend, who was an old buddy of a lot of ours.

MR. SIMMONS:
He is a marvellous guy too.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
A marvellous fellow. Don said to me, he said, "Look, I feel so proud that I was able to come from an agricultural background in Vegreville," I have been in his riding even before he was in politics back in 1965, when I was in Alberta studying. He said, "I am so proud to have a Polish background in Vegreville, an ordinary old guy and could make my way in through the system and become responsible for a part of Canada's decision-making." I believe he told me of some personal moves he made in his riding to enable or to help any ordinary person to be able to do the same. He said, "I hope it never reaches the stage where the most ordinary person in the system cannot achieve that kind of circumstance."

I was touched by his comments and he was genuinely sincere about it. So I say that our system is no more democratic than South Africa if the individual who is the most ordinary member of our society can aspire to, and without any impediment, become the leader of our party, the leader of our Province, the Premier, the minister, the member or whatever.

So, consequently, the answer is that the compensation should not be an impediment under any circumstances. So that is my philosophical position. My practical conclusion was, however, that if I want to go back into politics I would like to be able to treat the salary we are now getting as pocket money. So that is all it really is.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
You are all but saying that the total situation on compensation at the time, in your view, if not precluding you to staying in, precludes people from all walks of life from coming in.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
Certainly it does. It is not the salary. The salary is part of the problem. I think that every MHA

should be receiving a decent return for involvement and effort in the way of a salary which is able to provide a decent standard of living, bearing in mind some of the circumstances. You are living here and you are living there. Frequently there are two residences, if you want. There should be a decent salary. But more important to me, over and above the salary, is some kind of a system, which is an honourable system with a reporting process, where people can cover off the cost of their role. The MHA's salary today, if one is not really a squeaker, is really only enough to cover off your legitimate expenses. If you spent every cent that you got just doing the things that you should be doing, you would possibly end up with zero salary. So I can see a situation here where your salary would be zero.

I am absolutely certain in my mind that Don Jamieson never took home a cent. Under the system we have got today, I found at least, when you had an expense somewhere, even as a minister, you almost have to creep in and apologize and explain, belittle yourself, and frequently what I would do and other members we would not submit the expenses because the system was belittling. I do not have to do that in the work I do today. If I am in a company and I have legitimate responsibilities, I do not have to go to my people I am doing work for and explain if I get a taxi or two taxis or five taxis. If they perceive that I am belittling them or I am overstating the cost or if anything is wrong, I am not going to be there very long. There has to be some system of honour involved. You do not expect the person responsible for overseeing $2 billion to have to go in and say, I had a taxi for $2.75 out in Gander last weekend and I think you should pay me that. That whole thing is wrong. Not only is it wrong in the sense of having to go through that foolish process, but the process is not there for backbenchers. It is not even a process, it is not even an avenue, there is no system there to do that. So that is belittling. You cannot do that, you have to have the Speaker with a system. There has to be some latitude given where it is based on honour. Beyond that, there should be an avenue where you can apply for and receive permission to do your proper work in your area. That is the way it has to be done.

So the salary should be a generous legitimate salary and a salary, not money that is put out there and you have to use part of your money to carry on the governmental role. That is where the large part of your problem comes in today.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Gentlemen, any questions? I have a question, but have you any questions?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Mr. Lundrigan, one question I have, and let me go about it by saying this, as Mr. Simmons mentioned, you are a very good resource person, if I can put it that way, as a former member of Parliament, a former MHA, and a former minister. Since you have left the Legislature, you have worked in industry. Your comments, as regards to what will fly and will not, are very thought provoking. You will not be surprised to know that a variety of people have appeared before the Committee. Of course one of the

reasons was to gauge not only public opinion but to get ideas and suggestions from people away from the Legislature. You, having been in both Houses and as a former minister, are in a very good position to make observations on this.

We have had people such as the President of the Chartered Accountants Association. We have had labour leaders. We have had teachers. We have had former MHAs and former members of Parliament. By and large, I think to the largest extent, everyone said the same thing. The salaries are too low, the compensation package is not nearly rich enough to allow a member to perform and to function properly and not be out of pocket, whether it is salary, whether it is expense, whether it is per diem or whatever it might be. Equally everyone highlighted the necessity of an enlarged or a different kind of committee system.

Your point about public perception also is a thread that ran right through almost everyone's presentation. Of course you have highlighted it in a manner which is obviously synonymous with your various background and experiences. Notwithstanding the fact that we, as members, have a vested interest in presiding over issues which pertain to ourselves and our colleagues, what significance do you attach to people from the various walks of life, professions who have come before us and who have said, "Do this. Do that.".

Let me end with the question by quoting from the President of the Chartered Accountants Association in Corner Brook, who appeared before us in Corner Brook. He said to us, by the way, that salaries of members should be on the executive level, which is basically what you have said. He also highlighted the fact of how ludicrous it was, which you have also zeroed in on - that is why I am making the connection - to have a deputy minister making more than the minister that he takes orders from and works for. He reminded us that even in the present government system there is a policy that once an employee reporting to a supervisor reaches the same level or a bit above that supervisor, there is a policy that roles into action to correct that, to make the supervisor at least earn a few dollars more.

He said to us, "How many chartered accountants have you got in the Legislature?". Of course we said, "None". He told us why - salary, the compensation package! The labour leader said to us, "You are crazy! Who would be crazy enough to get in public life with the present situation?".

My question to you then is what significance do you attach to comments like that coming from people who are not members in relation to the public perception of whether something, by way of recommendation, would fly or not? Do you think it reduces your point?

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
No, not in the least. They are in the vast minority. They are always the group of people who would understand anyway, if members tomorrow said we are going to pay $70,000 a year or $50,000, they would understand it to begin with, but the majority of the people in the Province are not in that group. They are the 5 per cent or 10 per cent of the executive group of paid people in

the Province and they do not understand why you are paid a significant amount less. But the vast majority of the people in the Province are getting paid a lot less than you are getting paid. They are the people who would be intolerant and who would not understand.

The danger is, from my point of view, if the government today were to bring in a package that took your amount, which is what?

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
$23,000 sessional indemnity, plus $11,000 is expense.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
So you are talking $34,000. If you took from $34,000 say to $60,000 which I think would be a number that some of these people would have been thinking about, $50,000 or $60,000 or $70,000, there would be a tremendous amount of public outcry that it violated everything that had been worked for in the last couple of years in order to, number one, recognize the need for restraint and all the rest of the things.

Secondly, in comparsion to the parts of the world that I have observed, and it is only my own observation as not an older guy, we have very difficult economic circumstances. You tend to have the strongest labour movements. The reason that it tends to be that way is that the group in the labour movement tend to have a tremendous amount of influence over what the people in their movement think and what they do because there is no option beyond that group. They cannot say, "Well to heck with you. I do not agree with you. I will walk over here". So we tend to get strong movements. In this Province today one of the negative signals going out to other parts of the world is that this is a difficult place in which to do business. It is a difficult area. There tends to be a fair amount of unrest and I am not saying that to blame anybody for the unrest but I am saying it is there. I think if you were to look at a major move to try and compensate for the problems that MHAs have today, it would tend to increase that unrest. I would think government would have to be concerned about it as well. And I do not think it would fly.

I do not think the public in the various communities, especially right now where there has been such a tremendous problem this year in a lot of our regions with the fishing industry and the like. This Winter is going to be a rough Winter. There is no hiding that at all. The consumers spending power in this Province is not high, off the Avalon it is dramatically low, it is disconcertingly low and I think if we were to make a move so that all of a sudden "those bunch of so and sos in there are getting such and such," the impact on an already cynical public would be heavy. Therefore, I am suggesting to you that you build in legitimate ways to compensate members without deviating dramatically from the existing salary ranges. I think the public expect that and understand it. No person in the public expects Tom Lush to go out to his riding in Bonavista North and spend $1,000 on a weekend for a legitimate governmental-type activity and pay it out of his own pocket. Nobody would believe him if he said he did. I used to go out to Island Cove every other weekend when I was in politics and I would always manage to find my way into some of the social environments. I frequently picked up a few tabs and they were not always small ones, and to this minute there is not soul believes I did not have the money coming from the government. I gave it up a couple of years ago when a bunch of my best friends said to me that luckily I was getting back the money that I was paying. I never got one bit of credit for being generous. So I said, "You bunch of vagabonds, forget it! You are cut off at the pass. I will never spend another cent on you." Well, I have not been quite that bad but I have been just about as bad as that.

So the fact of the matter is no one believes that Tom Lush does not have a way to get back his money. So, therefore, let us make it available to Tom Lush. The second thing, if he is working for three months in the building, he is in the Legislature and he is probably compensated for that, the Summer comes around, he is not making a living he has got to compensate somehow, he has got to go and sell insurance or drive a taxi, pick blueberries, or whatever the case might be, and there is a role. That is not what he should be doing. He is elected to be part of a government process. His riding is down there, the fishing is failing, he should be there, he should be among his people, he should be making reports, he should be lobbying, he should be going to Ottawa talking to people trying to push industrial and other projects for the people. He should be full-time at it if he is any good. How can he take the Summer and spend his days at that if there is no compensation for that effort? So I am saying that one way to get around it is to build in a per diem arrangement.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
And use the committee system.

MR. LUNDRIGAN:
The committee system does not excite me as much. I used to say that one time but I have gotten more practical about it I think. I do not know if the Committee system will work as well. But I think it is harder to put together, like the committee travelling here and travelling there and travelling somewhere else. That provides good ways for people to vent frustrations and sometimes for committee people to be familiar with what is going on. It might even be good politics for political individuals or parties, but I do not think it really is a heavy positive. What I think is a positive is if that person is allowed to cut a broad swath in the system by doing his legitimate travelling. He has got to justify it. He might even find, if he is going to Ottawa on behalf of his people, a report on it or some other way enables the parliamentary system to measure the legitimacy of what he does. I do not have to phone anybody if I want to go here or there right now to do my work on behalf of my clients. I do it. I tell them afterwards when I write my report. That member should have the same access. But if he takes his five days to go to somewhere in the world or to his riding to promote his industry or his community or his district or whatever, he certainly should be able to charge a couple of hundreds bucks a day per diem or something of that nature. That is legitimate activity, carried on in a constructive way, and an instructed way on behalf of his people.

So I am saying realistically if

you want to get a better package, come up with a better deal for the public too, and a better deal is that you have a modest arrangement for salary, certainly more than you are getting now, but that you take the other avenues and areas that could be there and build in a legitimate role for your MHA. Therefore, if he is doing his work in his riding, as he should be doing, he is totally in contact with his riding, then he should be compensated by having all his expenses covered, every last nickel, even if they are large expenses. Like large expenses $500 or $700 or $1200 is out of the reach of any MHA, but if you add all that up it is only a penny in the political process. It is legitimate work that he should be doing. As a matter of fact, he should be doing a lot more of it anyway because that is where he should be, among the people, and meeting them, engaging with them, and if it costs money to do that, that is what he should be doing. But he should be compensated with a per diem arrangement so that he makes a living out of it. I cannot go anywhere without getting a per diem. The per diems that are charged today by lawyers and people in the work that I do are very high, compared with what the MHA would be happy with.

I think you can achieve your package in a way that the public will accept, of you recognize that it is going to be almost impossible to do it through the salary route, but I think the public will have to understand that if there is an expense and a per diem and office arrangements made, they are the ones getting the bargain and not the individual member. You are getting the benefit from the member and that is where the thing is lacking. If Tom Lush wants to go out to Bonavista North right now to serve his area, there is no way that he can cover off his cost. He would come back in the hole. What does he tend to do, therefore? He tends not to go. So it should cover every cost that can be incurred and he should also be compensated for his effort as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Very good, Sir.

No more questions?

I thank you very much for coming. You have given us some food for thought. We appreciate very much you taking time out of what we know is a very busy schedule. We are sorry that we were not able to get together and accommodate you earlier. Thank you very much.

The Committee now stands adjourned.